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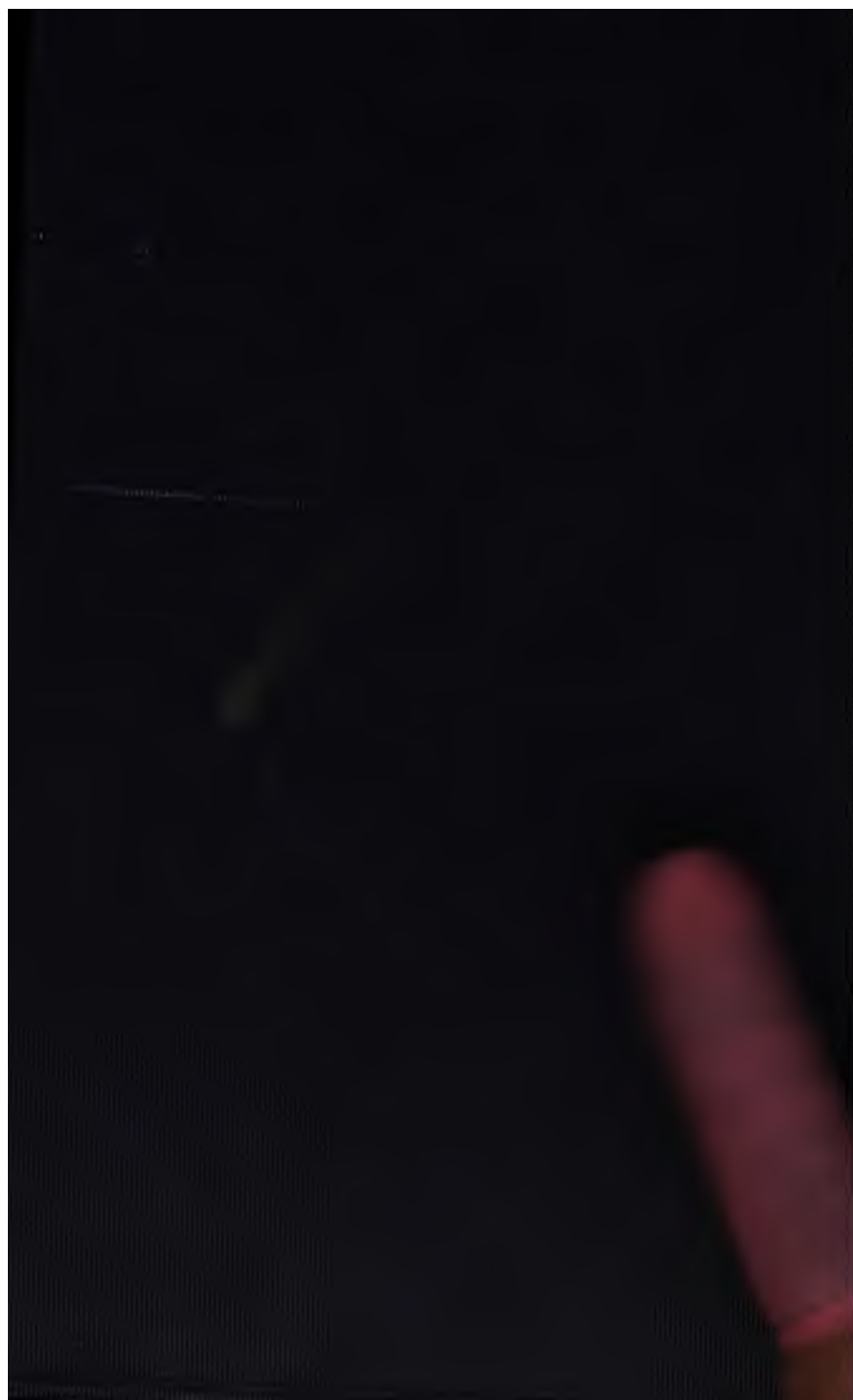
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# **The Peril and the Preservation of the Home**



# The Peril and the Preservation of the Home

Being the William L. Bull  
Lectures for the Year 1903

By  
JACOB A. RIIS

*Author of "The Making of an American," "The Battle  
with the Slum," etc.*



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## The Letter Establishing the Lectureship

For many years, it has been my earnest desire to found a Lectureship on Christian Sociology, meaning thereby the application of Christian principles to the social, industrial, and economic problems of the time, in my alma mater, the Philadelphia Divinity School. My object in founding this Lectureship is to secure the free, frank, and full consideration of these subjects with special reference to the Christian aspects of the questions involved, which have heretofore, in my opinion, been too much neglected in such discussion. It would seem that the time is now ripe and the moment an auspicious one for the establishment of this Lectureship, at least tentatively.

I therefore make the following offer to continue for at least a period of three years, with the hope that these lectures may excite such an interest, particularly among the undergraduates of the Divinity School, that I shall be justified, with the approval of the authorities of the Divinity School, in placing the Lectureship on a more permanent foundation.

I herewith pledge myself to contribute the sum of six hundred dollars annually, for a period of three years, to the payment of a lecturer on Christian Sociology, whose duty it shall be to deliver a course of not less than four lectures to the students of the Divinity School, either at the school or elsewhere, as may be deemed most advisable, on the application of Christian principles to the social, industrial, and economic problems and needs of the times; the said lecturer to be appointed annually by a committee of five members: the Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania; the Dean of the Divinity School; a member of the Board of Overseers; and two of the Associate Alumni, one of whom shall be chosen by the Alumni Association, and the other to be myself.

Furthermore, if it shall be deemed desirable that the lectures shall be published, I pledge myself to the additional payment of from one to two hundred dollars for such purpose.

To secure the full, frank, and free consideration of the questions involved, it is my desire that the opportunity shall be given from time to time to the representatives of each school of economic thought to express their views in these lectures.

The only restriction I wish placed on the lecturer is that he shall be a believer in the moral teachings and principles of the Christian religion as the true solvent of our social, industrial, and economic problems. Of course, it is my intention that a new lecturer shall be appointed by the committee each year, who shall deliver the course of lectures for the ensuing year.

WILLIAM L. BULL.

*All Saints' Cathedral,  
Spokane, Washington,  
January 1, 1901.*

The Committee	{	O. W. WHITAKER,
		Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania.
		WILLIAM M. GROTON,
		Dean of the Philadelphia Divinity School.
		J. DEWOLF PERRY,
		LYMAN P. POWELL,
		WILLIAM L. BULL.



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**I**

**OUR SINS IN THE PAST**





# I

## OUR SINS IN THE PAST

AT the very outset of my discussion of the peril and the preservation of the American home, I am confronted with an apparent contradiction that would seem to deny my premises, my contention that upon the preservation of the home depends the vitality of our Republic; that, if the home were gone, we should be fighting against overwhelming odds in the battle to maintain it and would as surely lose. But I think you will find that the contradiction is only apparent. I refer to the fact—let me state it right here and have the enemy all in front, I like it that way—that, whereas in my own great city I attribute to our unhappy housing conditions (those conditions which have given to New York the bad name of “the homeless city,”) most

of the troubles that have made our municipal government a by-word in the past and raised doubts in the minds of some as to the fitness of our people, of any people, to govern themselves rightly ; yet in this city of yours to which I have come to make the arraignment, the one among all our great communities that has the distinction of having preserved the home ideal most nearly, you are, as far as any one can make out, no better off than we. It has sometimes seemed that you were even worse off. You have your fight, as we have ours. But do not let it discourage you if, for the time being, you are outnumbered. The point is that there are more to help every time. Looking back now on the many battles in my city, I can see that every defeat we suffered was really a victory ; it showed us how to do better next time. So is defeat always gain in the cause of right, if we would only see it. We grow to the stature of men under it. Is it not, when it comes to that, just a question whether you believe

firmly enough in your own cause? Faith can move mountains of indifference, even here in Pennsylvania.

I said it seemed a contradiction, and yet only seemed so. It is because I am sure your sufferings have been *in spite* of your homes, not because of any *lack* of them. Standing the other day on a mountain-side in New Hampshire, with a matchless view stretching out before me, I said to my friend, the good rector and faithful pastor of the parish: "Here everybody must surely be good. How can they help it?"

He looked at me sadly and said, pointing to the scattered farms lying so peacefully in the landscape: "If you could go with me into those homes and see the things I see in too many of them you would quit your Mulberry Bend and transfer your battle with the slum to our hillsides."

I think, if you will permit me to say it, that your great and splendid city has been I am almost tempted to say pauperized in its citizenship by great wealth and perilous

prosperity ; by a pampered prosperity that is not good for anybody in the long run. However, that is politics, which I shall not discuss. The President of the United States says that my opinion in that quarter is no good at all, and you are free to adopt his view. I will endorse his views—most of them—anywhere. I seek in mine an explanation of the civic apathy that has betrayed your town, as it has mine, into the grasp of a boss and of boss politics. It may be that I am mistaken. It may be that I put too much of the blame on the piggeries. I used to say that a man cannot be expected to live like a pig and vote like a man, and I had reference to the tenements, some of which surely deserve to be called by no other name. I was very sure of my ground until the industrial troubles of the last summer seemed to cut it partly from under me ; for then I had people who were well-to-do, educated, and who ought to know better, right in my own town, come and upaid me for always fighting the battle with



the slum. "What is the use?" they said; "they won't be content." Since that time I have thought that perhaps there may be pigs in parlors, too. No, thank God, they will *not* be content. Let me say right here, so that we may understand one another, that the whole of my manhood's life has been given and what remains of it will be given, please God, to fighting the things, *all of them*, that go to debase and degrade manhood and womanhood; so I understand a Christian's duty.

In that I know I have not erred. If I have laid too much stress on the piggeries, it but proves that the peril of the home is not the only one that besets our Republic, and that we need be up and doing. But still I believe that the home is the mainstay; that it rather proves the home to be beset with perils not in the cities only. All the more am I convinced that around it only can the fight be waged successfully; and I have full faith that just because you have preserved the home better than have

we, when the day of waking comes, you will throw off the nightmare that has plagued your dreams with such a jolt as will warn it off for good and all and tempt it to return no more. Of that I am sure. God speed you in the fight!

I shall not in this place have to enter into a protracted argument to prove that the home is the pivot of all and why it is so. We *know* that it is so, that it has been so in all ages; that the home-loving peoples have been the strong peoples in all time, those that have left a lasting impression on the world. Stable government is but the protection the law throws around the home, and the law itself is the outgrowth of the effort to preserve it. The Romans, whose heirs we are in most matters pertaining to the larger community life, and whose law our courts are expounding yet, set their altars and their firesides together,—*pro aris et pro foci*; and their holiest oaths were by their household gods. I have always thought that in that lay the secret of

their strength, and that in the separation of the fireside and the altar lies the great peril of our day. When for the fireside we got a hole in the floor and a hot air register, we lost not only the lodestone that drew the scattered members of the family to a common focus, but with it went too often the old and holy sense of home: "I and my house, we will serve the Lord." Rome perished when most of her people became propertyless—homeless. Whenever I think of it there comes to my mind a significant passage in the testimony of the secretary of the Prison Association in my city before a legislative committee appointed to investigate the draft riots of 1863. The mob, he said, came, as did eighty per cent. of the crime in the metropolis, from the element in the population "whose homes had ceased to be sufficiently separate, decent and desirable to afford what are regarded as ordinary wholesome influences of home and family." The household god of the slum tenement is too apt to be



the boss with his corruption of the neighbor ideal into utter selfishness. On that road lies destruction.

In France, many years ago, a voice was raised in warning: "Kill the home and you destroy family, manhood, patriotism." The warning was vain, and the home-loving Germans won easily over the people in whose language there is not even a word to describe what we express in the word "home."

How much of the strength of the old New England home went into the making of our Republic you know as well as I. It is that thought which makes me pause when I remember that in their day one in twenty-five of the people lived in cities, whereas now the showing is one in three, with all of the influences of the city seeming to push against the chief prop of the State, the home. Is it not the chief prop? Imagine a nation of homeless men, a nation deserving the epithet, "the homeless people"; what would it have to preserve,

what to fight for? And however given to peace we all may be, in the last analysis the test of a nation's fitness to live is that it will fight for its life. No! wipe out the home and the whole structure totters and falls. Even if it hang together yet a while, it is not worth preserving, not worth fighting for.

If we had any doubt about it, we have had some information upon the subject given us in recent years, in my state and in yours. It was here in your city that the Children's Aid Society demonstrated, in a way that did us all good through and through, that the old plan of bringing up children in squads, which had been tried until it sickened them and us, was bad, and that placing them out in families made all the difference in the world. We knew it before, but we needed to be told it in just that way. We had the experience over again in New York; they had it in Boston; they have had it everywhere. But very lately we have had a

piece of testimony to that effect that ought to settle the matter. It was an old scandal in our city that practically all the babies in the Foundling Hospital died there ; none lived to grow up. I say scandal, not in the sense that any one was to blame. They tried hard enough. Men are not monsters to see a defenseless baby die without trying to help it. In the worst Tammany days, we had herds of Jersey cows on Randall's Island, kept expressly for those waifs. Everything was done that pity and experience could suggest, but nothing availed. The babies died, and there was no help for it. Until four years ago, when a joint committee of the State Charities' Aid Association and the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, took them off the hands of the city authorities and put them in homes. The first year after that the mortality among them fell to a little over *fifty* per cent., the second year it was just beyond *thirty* per cent. and the fourth, which was last year, it had fallen to

*ten and seven-tenths* per cent., a figure quite below the mortality among all the children under two years of age in the whole city. And the experience in Brooklyn was just the same.

What did it mean? It meant this, and nothing less, that these children had come at last to their rights; that every baby is entitled to one pair of mother's arms around its neck; that its God-given right is a home,—a *home*; and that, when man robs it of that right, it will not stay. And small blame to it! It shows that even foundling babies have good sense. They stayed, these, in such numbers—their death rate fell below the ordinary death rate of all the children of their age—because they were *picked* homes they were put into. It meant, friends, that God puts a little child in a home because He wants it to grow up with that as its most precious heritage, its spark of heaven that ever beckons it to its true home beyond. It means that you cannot herd human beings in battalions and expect

them to develop the qualities of individuality, of character, that make citizenship upon which to build the Republic that shall be the hope of to-morrow as well as the shelter of to-day. We tried that with the "communities" that wiped out the family and substituted the barrack for the home. But happily they wiped out themselves. No, brethren, upon the home rests our moral character; our civic and political liberties are grounded there; virtue, manhood, citizenship grow there. We forget it to our peril. For American citizenship in the long run, will be, *must be*, what the American home is.

And this home, how does it look to me? The ideal, always in my mind, is that of a man with his feet upon the soil and his children growing up there. So, it seems to me, we should have responsible citizenship by the surest road. But that ideal is unattainable in our cities. We must find another there. And I ask, as the minimum standard, less than which I will not

take, isolation enough in the teeming crowds to secure the privacy without which individuality cannot grow and character is fearfully handicapped. I ask light and air, at least as plentiful and as good as they have it in the great cattle barns I have seen in my own old home, where their cows are their most precious possession, because through them the people make their living. I ask an environment in which a man may think himself a respectable citizen, an environment that has no suggestion of the pigsty. You have no business to try to persuade an American citizen that that is his place. It is treason against the republic. I ask, above all, the mother who makes the home; I want the mother. Without her, home is but an empty name.

What, then, of the barrack that destroys privacy, whose crowds make life loathsome, whose restricted and narrow quarters compel the use of the family room only for eating and sleeping; not the latter even when the summer heats come and the people, to

live, must sleep on the roof or out on the fire-escape? What of those things which send the children to the street, there to grow such character as they can; that smother in them even the instinct for the open, for the fields and the woods that is like the last open window for the soul; rob them of those resources of mind and heart that make them respond quickly to the robin's and the daisy's appeal and make them at home in God's nature; that give them the gutter for a playground, and the saloon, as they grow, for their natural meeting-place,—their only one, indeed; for it is only just beginning to dawn upon us that in neglecting that function of the public school, we have been guilty of a fearful and wicked waste.

What of these; and what of the need—the need of making the rent—that sends the mother to the factory, leaving perhaps the little ones behind, locked in as the only alternative of the street? Locked in and left to the chance, the awful chance, of a fire

in that tenement with the children helpless to get out and no one knowing of their plight. I say it with a shudder, for I have had to record as a reporter too many—oh! God! too many by far—of these things which wring the heart of a man. What of the grinding need that sends the mother to the shop and so knocks the big and the strong prop from under the home?

Or, perhaps, the children go along. Then there is no home; for I do not call the cheerless room to which they return for their evening meal, tired and worn and spiritless, to sleep but not to play—I do not call that home.

We know the curse of child labor. We know it to our sorrow and loss. Experience has taught us that it is loss, all loss, ever tending downward; that, however we figure it, the result is always the same: where men alone work, they earn the support of the family; where men and women work, they together earn the sup-



port, with nothing to spare; and where men, women and children work, they do that and no more; so that nothing is gained and everything is lost. Child-life and citizenship are lost; for the children of to-day are the men of to-morrow. We know it to our cost, and you have the lesson before you, though you do not seem to have learned it. When you do, you will find the cost appalling.

What else was the meaning of the testimony given before the Coal Strike Commission, that moved its members to tears and anger by turns? And why in the twelfth census has Pennsylvania fallen from the sixteenth to the twentieth place on the list of states that send their children to school? It is true that there has been no absolute retrogression, for while in 1890 there were over two per cent. of your children between the ages of ten and fourteen years who could neither read nor write, in 1900 the illiterates numbered barely over one in a hundred. But that one is one too many, and

why is he there? Because, according to the showing of the factory inspectors—and the factory inspectors are always optimists—there were thirty-five thousand of your children at work, who should have been in school, not counting the breaker-boys in your mines. As to them, the coal operators owned up to thirty thousand being in the mines who never should have been there.

So we are not alone in our sins against childhood. New York is first among the great industrial states, Pennsylvania is second, and this is the showing we make as toward the citizenship of to-morrow: New York fourteenth, Pennsylvania twentieth. Even South Dakota and Wyoming are ahead of Pennsylvania, and Utah a long way ahead of New York. Industrial States! The industrial supremacy that is bought at the expense of childhood's rights tends directly to man's enslavement. It is too dearly bought. Sins against childhood are sins against the home, are cheating the world of its to-morrow. And you salve your

consciences in vain with the thought that those illiterate ones are the children of foreigners. *You* let them in, to be your Americans of the day that is coming ;—you sent for them, your critics say, to underbid the labor that sought a higher wage because they wanted American homes,—and it is your business to see to it that they, or their children, at all events, fit into the state of which you have made them part. Or woe to that state !

You need not marvel that in the commonwealth that forgets its duty to the home even to that extent, you have a heavy contract on your hands to redeem its greatest city. It is the same conscience that is asleep there. It is all of a piece. Every once in awhile I hear some one growl against foreign missions because the money and the strength put into them are needed at home. I did it myself when I did not know better, God forgive me. I know better now ; and I will tell you how I found out. I became interested in a

strong religious awakening in my own old city of Copenhagen, and I set about investigating it. It was then that I learned what others have learned before me, and what was the fact there, that for every dollar you give away to convert the heathen abroad, God gives you ten dollars' worth of purpose to deal with your heathen at home. So, as you set about crushing out selfishness, greed and evil in the state, you step on the snake's head at home,—in your own city.

You do not need the city tenement as a monument of civic folly in wrecking the home. There are other ways of doing it, and none surer or quicker than by forcing the children to labor when they should be at play. The city crowds have no monopoly of the slum, though they have the lion's share of it. It thrives wherever ignorance and helpless poverty are, and child labor is the shortest road to both.

The city tenements are the crowded highway. Listen to this description of them in my own city :

“ The tenement districts of New York are places in which thousands of people are living in the smallest space in which it is possible for human beings to exist—crowded together in dark, ill-ventilated rooms, in many of which the sunlight never enters, and in most of which fresh air is unknown. They are centres of disease, poverty, vice and crime, where it is a marvel—not that children grow up to be thieves, drunkards and prostitutes, but that so many should ever grow up to be decent and self-respecting. All the conditions which surround childhood, youth and womanhood in New York’s crowded tenement quarters make for unrighteousness. They also make for disease. There is hardly a tenement house in which there has not been at least one case of pulmonary tuberculosis within the last five years, and in some houses there have been as great a number as twenty-two different cases of this terrible disease. From the tenements there comes a stream of sick, helpless people to our hospitals and dis-

pensaries—from them also comes a host of paupers and charity seekers. The most terrible of all the features of tenement-house life in New York, however, is the indiscriminate herding of all kinds of people in close contact; the fact that, mingled with the drunken, the dissolute, the improvident, the diseased, dwell the great mass of the respectable workingmen of the city with their families.”

I am not quoting newspaper condemnation. The newspapers have not always been found on that side of the line. I am not quoting from my own writings, these many years, on this subject. The paragraph is from the official report of the Tenement House Commission of 1900, of which I was not a member; nor is it alone in its condemnation. “They,” said the Tenement House Committee of 1894, speaking of the tenements, “interfere with the separateness and sacredness of the home, and . . . conduce to the corruption of the young.” There you have it in a nut-shell. They

destroy the home and corrupt youth! But think of it! "All the conditions make for unrighteousness"—in a city of soon four million souls, half of whom come under that ban! And all the cities in the land copying after and tending the same way,—with yours, thank God! bringing up the rear. Keep Philadelphia there, brethren, as you value your civic life. With the tenement added to the rest you will never work out from under it. Keep it out, under whatever name it comes, whether as a French flat, an apartment house, or what not. It all means the destruction of the home ideal. Flats are but showy tenements. There is not one of them with a chimney big enough to let in Santa Claus, and you might as well give up at once as to have him excluded. There are few enough of them that, were the watchful eye of the sanitary policeman taken off them for six months, would not turn out as bad as the worst. And he has got one eye on the district leader now. Keep out the tene-

ment; it is the enemy of the commonwealth. And ever hold in high honor the men who fight that fight for you, whether they be Jewish rabbis, Christian ministers, or lay brethren laboring for the good of their kind. They fight for your very life.

I shall have much to say about these tenements hereafter. I will try to show in pictures that will help you to the understanding of it, how they injure the social fabric. Here I wish to remind you that that injury is yours as well as ours. An injury to one *is* the concern of all in a democracy like ours. You cannot have citizenship tainted at one end of the line and expect to keep it untainted at the other end. It works mischief both ways. Ignorance hurts the state in the man who groans under it, and in the man who enslaved his mind, who permitted and was responsible for the outrage. It is of no use to shut our eyes to it. The slum is a cancer that has long roots reaching the avenue as well as the alley. The consciousness, however



vague, of having betrayed his brother, breeds hardness of heart in the betrayer, for which alms-giving does not atone.

"Forgiveness to the injured doth belong,  
He never forgives who did the wrong."

Watch and you will find that, when the slum vote is most in evidence, careless wealth goes shooting on election day and lets the Republic go to the dogs. Well may the president make the slum an issue in his message! He is right, for citizenship is murdered there. And well may the Church put the redemption of the slum increasingly into its preaching and into its practice! It is angling for living men, not for dead ones. I spoke of pigsties. Tell me, what sense is there in a man's sitting comfortably in his pew of a Sunday, inviting his soul with a view of the beautiful mansion he has engaged on high, and letting his brother below wallow in his slough the while? Do you think that bargain will stand? I do not. I think he runs a very excellent chance, when his race

is over, of having to take *his* turn in the sty. We are brothers whether we own it or not, and you and I together have to carry the load which is of our making. Try you ever so hard, you cannot lay down your end, and neither can I, mine.

Is it not the old, old story of human selfishness that tries ever to get the easy end at the expense of the toiling brother? The woman who shuts her eyes to the fact that "women's wages have no lowest limit, since the paths of shame are always open to them,"<sup>1</sup> and joins in the rush at the bargain counter, the pennies she saves literally, *literally* the life-drops of her sister, body and soul! the selfish man who says: "What is it to me?" the labor leader who, for personal gain, sacrifices his cause, which is the cause of human progress, "the effort of men, being men, to live like men"—these are they who are selling the American home in our cities into slavery. If anything could make me believe in purgatory, it is

<sup>1</sup> Report of Working Women's Society in New York City.

the existence of their kind. We all need making over, but they seem to need purging by fire to turn the demon of selfishness out of them, that the spirit of brotherhood may enter. I do not know—I am not a prophet—but I think I can make out that we are on the eve of great social changes, for which our democracy was meant to prepare us, but for which it finds us even now unfit. And all because of that one thing, the great obstacle!

The blindness of them, not to see it! Whichever way we turn, where the selfishness crops out that is where the mistake is made that forfeits public sympathy, while it holds up the cause of human progress. Capital earns its fair reward. Promptly it seeks to crush out its neighbor—calls it protecting its own interests, as though we were so many beasts of prey whose appetites were the one thing we had in common; proclaims from the house-tops the age-old doctrine of privilege—God-given privilege!—from which the world has been

trying for centuries to get away ; calls the President of the United States, when he tries to make peace, a tinkering politician ; and sits in the high seat of the constitution, as if it were made for the protection of property only and had nothing whatever to do with the people ! I yield to no man in my respect for the constitution of our land. It is so great and so real that I object to having it worked up into either a sceptre to coerce men, or a fetish to cajole them, as much as I object to having the Bible used that way. I take the constitution to be a human document, the record of action taken by wise and patriotic men to meet emergencies that arose in their day. Unless we are to assume that wisdom died with them ; that human experience was completed and bound in volumes to file away on dusty shelves, with nothing more ever to happen that requires judgment or action ; or unless we are to confess ourselves unable to take such action when the time comes, we shall be wise to drop the fetish

business and to deal with the constitution as men capable of defending their lives and their liberties, including the right to work, and the right not to be frozen to death at the dictation of a half dozen coal kings, upon any plane upon which those liberties may be attacked. This intense regard for the constitution, that is wont to develop in men and newspapers in exact ratio as their love of the brother dies, always suggests to me the fatal ritualism that is akin to the letter that killeth. Something has to make up for that which has been lost ; but nothing ever can.

The wrongs of wealth ! We all know them. "It is the denial of them," said Theodore Roosevelt to me the other day, "that has confronted the world with the challenge that 'property is theft.'" And he was right. But capital has no monopoly of wrong. Labor organizes its multitudes and instantly raises a club to keep out the man who does not think as the next man does, with violence if he will not go will-

ingly. The shallow self-seeking of its advocates, the ignorant blundering of their followers, is often enough to make one sick at heart. We have to look beyond them to the real claims of the cause of labor to having served the world by making homes out of hovels, by making free men out of slaves, by giving back to man his self-respect. We have to take the long-range view to forget the immediate injury and put things right. Organized labor, with all its mistakes, has put us heavily into its debt, for it is true that "only a self-respecting people can remain a free people." Wrongs there are on both sides. If capital sought but its just reward, it would find it compatible with giving labor its fair share. If labor thought of the rights of the employer with its own; if the fight were ever for the good of the race as it was meant to be; if the union label always guaranteed honest work, a living wage, no sweatshop or child labor, a clean shop and a fair observance of the

factory laws, its cause would be irresistible.

That is it. You know it and I know it. The right, when it appears stripped of all self-seeking, is irresistible. Hence our fight is never hopeless or vain.

The employer who says that he will not treat with his men, that they must obey or get out, forfeits public sympathy and loses his case in our day. The self-seeking union that betrays its cause has no standing in the court of public opinion. It means that appeal can be made to the good in men, can be made with more success than ever. I am warned to beware of a false optimism that digs pitfalls for our feet by making us think there is nothing more to be done. I know that danger ; but that the warning should be uttered is in itself the latest endorsement of my faith in the better day that is dawning. There was little enough to tie that faith to in the days when I wrote "How the Other Half Lives" ; but there is enough now for us all

to see, and I, in turn, warn him who will not see it, against the pessimism that is both false and disabling. No, thank God, you can at last make your appeal to the consciences of men, and that is why I make it here. I want the church to back it. It is from that quarter that I expect the strong blows to be struck for the home, the blows that will tell. "All the conditions which surround childhood, youth and womanhood" in the crowded tenements of New York City, of the metropolis, "make for unrighteousness." Is not the call to the Church of God?

Yes! and it has heard the call and is heeding it. I have before me the record of the social activities of one church, St. George's, of which my friend, Dr. Rainsford, whom you know, is the rector. The year books of Grace Church, of St. Bartholomew's, of Calvary, of scores of churches in New York, would have like stories to tell. This grocery department, this sewing school, this employment society, these help-



ing hands, kindergartens, cooking schools and mothers' clubs—they all mean one thing, the determination to reclaim the home that is in peril; they mean that the men and women struggling there shall have backing; that they shall not be permitted "to be content" as they are, for when a man lies down under the slum he is lost. It means that war is declared against the slum, and is to be fought to the bitter end. The Church is coming to the rescue, and I am glad to bear witness that mine is in the van in generous rivalry with its neighbors.

Shall I tell you how I came to be an Episcopalian? I had long been tempted by my friendship for the rector whose church I attended in my own town, though I was not a member of his flock. I had been a Lutheran, a Methodist, a Congregationalist in my day; I would be a Roman Catholic rather than be nothing at all, though that would go hard with me. Denominational fetters ever sat lightly upon me, perhaps too lightly. So that I

marched under the flag, I cared less what regimental badge I wore. But one day, I read in my newspaper a growl from the East-side about Bishop Potter's Mission, the Pro-cathedral in Stanton Street. "Their services," wrote the man who did me this favor, "are of the kindergarten class : clubs, gymnastics, mothers' meetings, girls' dress-making classes—and they call *that* religion!" Ah! I thought, is that what they are doing over there? and I waited for the answer that was not long in coming.

"Yes," wrote the priest in charge, "we call it that; and, furthermore, it is our belief that a love of God that does not forthwith seek to run itself into some kindly deed to man is not worth having." That was their creed—I called it ever after "the Bishop's creed,"—and I told Bishop Potter then and there that if that was the creed of his church I would join, and I did.

I shall have occasion to show you how the church missed its great opportunity once; how it slept through its chance in

the days that are gone, and in its sleep did grievous wrong to the people's homes, which it ought to have defended. Those are of the sins of the past, and they have to be atoned for ; but, please God, we shall not sin thus again. The home that is in peril shall appeal, does appeal to-day to the Christian conscience—appeals from the rule of gold to the golden rule, from the rule of might to that of right ; and no longer does it appeal in vain. There was a time, even in my memory, when it was said with more show of reason than I care to think of, that the greatest church corporation in the land was the worst tenement house landlord in New York City. But to-day our appeal is to the churches. They aroused our consciences to action twenty years ago ; they and the Christian men and women who sit in them head every movement in our great city towards the redemption of the home ; they led in the fights for reform, for decent living conditions for the people, that wrested victory from the slum twice in the

last half dozen years. You all remember those fights and the share that this same Pro-cathedral with the Bishop's creed bore in the last one.

There was never such an arraignment of a city government as that made by the Bishop of New York in his letter to the mayor, calling upon him, "in the name of these little ones, these weak and defenseless ones, Christian and Hebrew alike, of many races and tongues, but from homes in which God is feared and His law revered," to save the people from a "living hell" of vice and corruption; and never was there such a response of an aroused city as to that summons. The heart of the people is all right; it is on the side of the Lord and His hosts, all doubting Thomases to the contrary notwithstanding. Let us be glad!

I remember a cry for help that came from over on that East-side, of which we hear so much. It was a good many years ago when I was a reporter in Mulberry Street, and it came from a church in a

letter to the Police Board asking for protection against the boys who played in the street in front of it and disturbed the Sunday worship. The captain of the precinct retorted that they had no other place in which to play and no other time for it, and that the minister of that church had better be about getting them a playground. That was in the days of little sense, and the result was that other cry that went up and made itself heard at a great meeting of all the churches: "How shall we lay hold of this great multitude that has forsaken our altars?" They have learned since to lay hold of it with gymnastics, kindergartens and boys' clubs, and the little handful of discouraged communicants has grown into hundreds that throng about the altar rail of St. George's and the other churches every Sunday. We have come into the days of good sense. I shall not be charged with false optimism in this; for I remember the day when the families on the register of St. George's could be counted in

one short breath, whereas now the communicants number more than eight thousand, the vast majority of them from the East-side tenements—with the mayor of the city teaching the Bible class in the Sunday-school and the president of the Citizens' Union and the greatest financier of any day among the strong backers of the rector and his work. I am but stating the facts in which I rejoice. My eyes are not shut to the troubles that are ahead in the changing populations over there; but I am not afraid of losing the Lord's fight, and neither are those in charge of St. George's. I speak of it as typical of all the rest of the parishes in New York who are enlisted in that war. It is the men who are not afraid who win battles. But first you must plan them.

Right here, I want to point out to you young men, who are going to take a hand in it, one of the weak spots, if not *the* weak spot, in your campaign for the home—that home which all the influences of the mod-

ern day combine to put in peril. I mean the disappearance of the family altar. Hand to hand with the crowding of the home to the wall, has gone the crowding out of the things that make it the representative of heaven on earth; until now one seldom hears of the old family worship, so seldom that it almost gives one a start to be asked to join in family prayer. And I am not referring to the homes of working men especially, but to those of the rich and prosperous as well. The causes of it? They are many and complex in the setting forth of them, I suspect: the hurry of our modern life, the new freedom that makes little minds think themselves bigger than their maker, the *de-moralization* of the public school, the pressure of business,—it is hard to get the family together—which is merely setting up the fact of the scattering of the home in the defense of it. The causes are many, but the result is one: the wreck of the home. I said it before, of child labor, that it was dearly paid for. So also

the business prosperity which makes us forget God is bought at a price no man can afford to pay. It is my cherished privilege sometimes to break bread with a pious Jewish friend, and when I see the family gathered about his board giving thanks, a blush comes to my cheek, a blush for my own people. Whence the abiding strength of that marvelous people through all the centuries of persecution in the name of the Prince of Peace, but from the fact that they still hold to the God of their fathers in their homes? I have been told of the experience of a friend in a town not far from mine, who asked his pastor on the occasion of a friendly evening visit to his house, to remain and pray with the family. The good man's face lighted up with pleased surprise, as he said: "I have been in this parish more than a year and this is the first time I have been asked to pray with any of my people in their homes." Is it any occasion for wonder that they have been vainly trying for more than a dozen years



in that place to build a new and very much needed church? They have never been able to raise the money, though their own houses are particularly nice; there is not a poor man in the parish in the sense of his wanting any of the necessities of life. But why should they build a house for the Lord when they have put Him out of their own homes? What sense would there be in that?

I say to you young men preparing for the priesthood, if you want strong churches and strong men and women in them, go worship with your parishioners in their homes. Take my word for it that you will be surprised at the result. We have filled the hungry mouths in our land of plenty, but there are more starving hearts than you know of all about you. Build up the family altar, and the home will come back of itself. Do not bother yourselves about "God in the Constitution," if you have Him installed in the people's homes. If God is feared in the home, *there* is written the Constitution

which will never need amendment. The greatest peril that besets the American home to-day is its godlessness. Put back the family altar and let there be written over it the old stout challenge to the devil and his hordes: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord;" and even the slum tenement shall seek to attack it in vain.

In the town of which I spoke, there have in the last half dozen years grown up two clubs, one for the men, the other for the women, and I am told that practically they all belong. The result has been the disappearance of pretty nearly all of the pleasant neighborhood life of that day when a man gave his arm to his wife after supper and they went together for a social call upon some neighbor, for a chat, a little music, going home in good season for bed, telling one another that they had had a good time. There are no good times in that town any more—not of that kind at all events. The men spend the evenings bowling at the club; the women meet in com-

mittees to plan public improvements. The old time supper has become a later dinner and it is the rarest of all things to find a neighbor "dropping in" unannounced—so rare that one feels that it somehow is not good form any longer. The family firesides are cold. And the young—I am told that there is a disproportionate number of them growing up idle and useless, if not worse. They have lost their hold, though they do not know it. I am no enemy of clubs, although I know little of them; but, as a substitute for the altar, I will fight them until I die. And I am a great backer of woman's influence in public affairs—it has been good always and everywhere in my sight; but I say to you now that I would rather see, we could better afford, that every club and organization in the land should cease to exist, and every ten-pin alley stand silent and deserted, than that the old home life which centred about the family hearth should go from among us. With it goes that which nothing, no com-

mercial gain, no advance in science, or government or human knowledge, can replace.

"But they are gone," I hear some one say, "the old patriarchal days, and you can't call them back." I wish there was no such word in the language as "can't." It has made more mischief than all the rest of them together. But in the last sifting the world is run by the men who *can*, while those who can't stand and look on. Who says you cannot do the thing that is right? That is what we are here for. Our business is to make out the right and then go ahead and do it. The Lord has all the time and all the resources that there are, and, if we do our best, we can leave Him to attend to the rest. Can't! If the Church says to-day that it cannot restore the old faith, that it cannot rekindle the altar fires that have grown cold, it had better go out of the business; it has become an unfaithful steward.

But as a matter of fact, it not only can, but nothing is easier. We are fighting

wind-mills of the devil's making. He put them there to frighten us off. In so far as we have lost our grip, it is because we Christians have been untrue to our mission, have failed to discern it. I see in all the social unrest and longings of the day the yearning heart of the world, which doctrine and ceremony and printed prayers have left and ever will leave cold. It is the praying *life* it cries out for. The very infidel owns the perfect man in our Christ; and he turns upon our faith in anger because he feels that he has been cheated of the love that must be *lived* by His followers to be felt. Only so can the world be made to see God in man. It was never more impatient for the sight than it is to-day.

When the century drew to a close, in common with many others, I looked for a great revival that should sweep over men and set their minds toward the things on high; and, when it did not come, when the new century came in without it, I was disappointed. Until one day there came a

letter to me from a friend whom I had known in all the years to be ever busy among His poor, toiling early and late in the Master's steps; a letter that expressed the same thought, the same disappointment. "When will it ever come," she wrote. And all at once it flashed through my mind that it had come, so silently, so gently,—even as He Himself came into the world, unheralded except by the angels' song to the shepherds in the field,—that we knew it not until it had passed and become history. What else is the mighty philanthropic movement of the last twenty years that has swayed the minds and hearts of men; that has given us the social settlement; that goes into the byways and the hedges searching for the lost neighbor and compels him to come in? What else is that but a revival of our faith on the lines Christ Himself laid down: binding up the wounds, caring for the sick and the stricken, helping him over the hard places, even paying his rent if he is helpless and poor?

“And on the morrow when he departed he took out twopence and gave them to the host and said unto him ‘take care of him and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.’”

Showing mercy! That is the badge of the neighborly spirit. “Go thou and do likewise.” That the world is coming back to Him by the door which the Saviour Himself pointed out, and which we shut, perhaps that is a rebuke to us for our lukewarmness, for our little faith and understanding. Let us learn the lesson, then, in humility and repentance, but let us never again be found saying “can’t” in His fight.

I spoke of the *de*-moralization of the public school. Observe that I did not say demoralization; I think we are working out of that. What I was thinking of was that, in our sectarian zeal to see that no heresy got in, we have, perhaps, come perilously near shutting the door against both reverence and truth, and so helped on worse mischief. It is a matter that has caused me a good



deal of uneasiness. I am troubled about it, and yet I do not know how to help it. Is it a sign that the school, too, is coming around to the neighborhood goal? that we have all, unknowingly, been helping to haul it around that way—this, I mean, that the ideal is growing which would have the school be the neighborhood *soul*, no longer the barren mind, merely? I like to think that it is, and that this was the thought which moved the Methodist ministers to promise me last summer to join heartily in the effort to get the public schools in my city opened for Sunday concerts. The "Lord's Day" stood in the way no longer—rather, it was what decided them. It had too long been the devil's day among those East-side multitudes.

I marked out for myself a straight talk, when you asked me to come to you,—and no preaching. The Lord knew what He was about when He made me a reporter, a gatherer of facts, and not a preacher: He makes no mistakes. But brethren! If



it had been different—if I had been worthy—— Oh! when I look upon you young men preparing to take up His work in the world—what can you not do if you but believe that your cause is His! What is there you cannot do? In my day, I have seen the merest handful of men and women, fewer in number than you can count upon the fingers of your two hands, but standing firmly for the right, pull my city upward, upward towards the light,—even in the worst of its bad days, and in spite of them. I tell you now that if all of you here, going out to your work as you believe with the apostolic charge upon you, were to go determined to follow in the apostles' steps, looking neither to the right nor to the left—to the living that is to keep you, nor to what expediency whispers—never losing hope, never hanging your heads, not being afraid of being called optimists—Christ was the great optimist of all ages; He never lost hope even of us—what could you not do? I learned

something when I was last in Denmark, where they make butter for a living and where they have two kinds of Christians, the happy Christians, as they are called, and the "hell preachers"; I learned there that, if you want good butter, you must buy it of the happy Christians; they make the best. So it is in all things in the world; the happy Christians made it go round. I tell you, brethren, that if all of you here now, or the half of you, or the fourth of you, were to go out to your work in that spirit, in the spirit of a dear old Lutheran woman I once knew who said on her death-bed, "I know but Him and Him crucified; if there is anything else I should know I am afraid I don't,"—if you were to go forth to your work in that spirit, letting all else go, Christian unity would come on the wave of an irresistible flood; so does the world hunger for the message you carry.

Suppose you do not live to see it come? We have so little time that we are always in a hurry, but *He* has all the time there is.

Why should I let the fact discourage me that wrongs are not all righted at once? It is nineteen hundred years since Christ came to a sin-ridden world to free it from bondage, and it is sin-ridden yet. Why should I think that I should be able to do better in my little time? I have a friend who, for many years, was connected with the naval observatory in Washington. A couple of years ago, when he was retired, I said to him that I always looked upon an astronomer with a kind of awe,—he seemed to me to be so near to the Almighty, at his elbow seeing Him work, as it were; and my friend smiled.

“I have not looked through a telescope at a star in a dozen years,” he said. “All the years I have been in the service I have been carrying on certain calculations that were begun before I was a man and that will go on years after I am dead. When they are finished at last, we shall know something worth knowing. Meanwhile, I and the rest of us have been but links in

the long chain upon whose trusty work depends the final value of it all. That I have tried to do my part faithfully must be my reward."

What greater reward could any man ask than this—to be a link, however humble, in the chain which links our world of men with God's kingdom on high and helps prepare this earth for His coming in His own good time?



## **II**

### **OUR FIGHT FOR THE HOME**



## II

### OUR FIGHT FOR THE HOME

WHEN I was preparing these lectures, it happened that I went out of town and, returning, crossed the river to New York in the morning before sunrise. I stood at the bow of the ferry-boat and looked at the city, lying wrapped in gloom, indistinguishable except for a light in some big building, itself unseen, piercing it here and there. But, over and beyond the gloom, the ruddy glow of the morning that was breaking grew steadily as I looked. I knew that soon it would be bright daylight. As I stood and watched it and as one after another the outlines of the old landmarks came out and took shape, I thought that so, at last, the dawn is breaking upon us in this fight for the home upon which all hinges. It is no longer an uphill fight *all* the time.



The other day, I spoke of discouragements that beset the way. They are there in plenty, but there has come into the fight a new note, that was missing before. We know now what the fight means. From other quarters, too, help is coming. Let me sound this note of hope right here; there is enough of the gloom. The critics of my books complain that I am unsystematic, that I "put things in" as I think of them. Perhaps so. I find it somehow easier to put them in when I think of them than when I don't think of them. Even while I am about to show you how deep we fell, let me remember the forces that are coming to help us out. I think that not only have we turned upon our track and seen the necessity of making the most of this city civilization with its unsolved problems, which is the order of the day; but I believe that we have reached the divide, the point where the population shall be turned back to the soil which it has been deserting.

Many things seem to me to tend that way. The isolation of the farm is disappearing. The telephone; the free rural delivery of mails, which brings good roads, daily newspapers and the bicycle; the concentration of rural schools; a better grasp of the obstacles in the way of keeping the boy on the farm—these at one end. At the other, the harnessing of new forces capable of transmitting power away from the centres of steam energy, and the scattering of the congested populations to the suburbs; means of transportation that we knew not of a dozen years ago. It seems as if the very century, the stamp of which is combination, concentration, so far as we are yet able to make it out, might have in store for us as its big surprise the reversal of the process that characterized its predecessor and bred our perplexities: the drift of the population everywhere to the cities. So that when it seemed in extremest peril, the rescue of the home may be made easier than we thought. I would that in this I might

be a true prophet! We can face the other problems of our day with confidence, if the *home* be safe ; for *there* we have backing.

And now let me take you to my own city, to the metropolis, as typical of most of the large cities of our country. We struggle with the same evils in Boston, in Chicago, in New York, in Buffalo, in St. Louis, in Washington. It was only the other day that I looked upon some alleys in the national capital, under the very shadow of the big gray dome, in which the crowding was as vile and as wicked as it ever was in the one-room houses of Glasgow. Though you boast of less crowding upon the land here in Philadelphia, yet we have the testimony of your public-spirited men and women that the sanitary condition of your alleys is far from good. That means darkness and dirt. In other words, you are no stranger to the pigsty of which I spoke as being the enemy of the home and of American citizenship. How came it about? What brought us to the brink, where, look-

ing over, we see "all the conditions" under which the people live "making for unrighteousness"?

I said it before; but let the public records speak. In 1865, the Council of Hygiene, pointing to the tenement slum, said, "Its evils and the perils that surround it are the necessary result of a forgetfulness of the poor." "Evils," was putting it mildly. They came in the last analysis to murder, child murder. The undertaker and the slum landlord divided the profits between them. "Not intemperance, ignorance or destitution alone causes the increase of crime," was the report of a committee come down from Albany in the fifties to see what was the matter with New York; "together they, with municipal and popular neglect, find their soil in the tenements and thrive and develop virulence." The remedy, as the committee saw it, was to "*furnish every man with a clean and comfortable home.*"

Tell me, what think you of "homes"

where men and women "crowded beneath moldering, water-rotted roofs or burrowed among the rats of clammy cellars"? I quote that from a report of the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, one of the most conservative and one of the wisest of our public charities, which, with unerring instinct, saw that the way to improve the condition, the morals, of the people was to give them decent homes. What do you think of cellar "homes" in which the children had to stay in bed till the tide fell; of homes where children died, "smothered by the foul air of an unventilated room," a windowless room<sup>1</sup> which the light of day never entered! That was the burden of a death certificate registered in the Health Department in those old, indifferent days. What think you of a city one-quarter of whose children

<sup>1</sup>Since these lectures were delivered the struggle to preserve the tenement house law has developed the fact that after thirty-seven years there are still over 300,000 windowless, dark rooms in the tenements of the Greater New York!

never grew up to lisp the sacred name of mother, one-third of whose babies never reached their third year, and one-half never manhood or womanhood! That was the record; and, when decency came, the death rate came down with it. Child murder ceased to be the fashion. In thirty-five years, the mortality in my city, while the population grew and grew, was reduced one-half. I mean, of course, the percentage of deaths upon the population. In the last dozen years, reform has saved enough lives in New York City alone annually to people a city of no mean proportions.

I must refer those who wish to get at the statistical facts to the reports of the successive Tenement House Commissions, or to my own record of the "Battle with the Slum," in which I have tried to gather them all. Only let me mention here that the death rate of New York came down from 26.32 per 1,000 inhabitants, in 1887, to 19.53 in 1897. It had been known to

run as high as 45 in 1,000 in bad seasons of the bad past ; and in individual instances much higher than that.

What think you of "homes," a hundred under one roof—a hundred families, mind you, not a hundred tenants—under the roof of a barrack stamped officially by the Health Board as a "den of death" ? I will tell you what that Senate Investigation Committee of 1857 thought of them: "The conclusion forced itself upon the reflections of all that certain conditions and associations of life and habitation are the prolific parents of corresponding habits and morals." Aye, they were. In that Sixth Ward slum grew up the Five Points. Out of it came the pigsty voters that voted Tweed and his thieves into possession of the city government, and the treasure, for which we had paid such a price, out of the pockets of the taxpayers, while the thieves mocked us and demanded what we were going to do about it. We had made money our idol, and



it put its foot upon our necks and trod hard.

For that was it. The only question that had been asked till then was : What would they bring, those tenements? The tenant must "pay the rent or get out." Indifference—popular neglect—that was the time for pulling it mildly ; for men of standing, of influence in the community, drew the pay that was the price of selling the brother into slavery. Listen to this from the report of the Council of Hygiene : "Some of them," meaning the owners of slum tenements, "are persons of the highest character, but they fail to appreciate the responsibility that rests upon them." They did. They failed so signally that, when called to account by the health inspectors in the years that followed, they "urged the filthy habits of their tenants as an excuse for the condition of their property." You will hear that plea, if you listen long enough and closely enough, even in our day. And whenever you hear it, stop



right there and think who is to blame for the cultivation of those habits. The health inspector of whom I spoke had no doubts upon the subject. The owners, he said, are *entirely* to blame. A pigsty, in time, will make a pig even of man who is made in the image of God. You can degrade him to that level if you try hard enough and are willing to pay the price.

They failed to appreciate their responsibility, those men of the highest character. They did not fail to collect the rents that sometimes went as high as forty per cent. upon the value of their property. No, but let us give them their due—an agent collected the rents, they did not. *They* traveled abroad; perhaps they never saw the dens upon the proceeds of which they lived at their ease. Do you see what I am driving at? Do you see how it all, here as everywhere, is just a question of gold that will buy *ease* for ourselves! For gold we sold the black man into slavery, and for gold we let his white brother perish in his

slum. We were in a hurry to get rich and we forgot all else besides ; forgot the brotherhood in our worship of the golden calf. Men have done it in all times, and the slum is as old as is organized society. "The destruction of the poor is their poverty." Whatever else was the matter with those houses, they paid.

I will tell you one thing that was the matter with that slum where the home had ceased to be sacred, where the family ideal was tortured to death and character smothered, where children were damned rather than born into the world until the very shock of the discovery that one in five was killed by the worst of the dens came almost as a relief. When the Church finally roused itself to the doing of its duty it put a long-belated finger upon the sore spot of it all :

"In this ward," said the Federation of Churches after a house-to-house canvass, "the churches, clubs, schools, educational and helpful agencies of every kind make a

front of 756 running feet on the street, while the saloons, put side by side, stretch themselves over nearly a mile ; so that ideals of citizenship are minting themselves upon the minds of the people at the rate of seven saloon thoughts to one educational thought." The devil had it in that ward, seven to one. Out of such an environment comes the Lost Tenth, the helpless and the hopeless, that levy tribute on our strength and our life. Comptroller Coler showed that eleven and one-half per cent. of all the money raised by taxation in New York went to support poverty and, largely, pauperism, with the burden all the time increasing. The poverty maps at our Tenement House Exhibition showed few enough tenements that were free from the taint of alms-seeking, but some from which, in five years, seventy-five different families had asked public relief. That is one thing that is the matter with the slum—it makes its own heredity. The sum of the bad environment of to-day and of yesterday becomes

the heredity of to-morrow, becomes the citizenship of to-morrow. The lowered vitality, the poor workmanship, the inefficiency, the loss of hope—they all enter in and make an endless chain upon which the curse of the slum is handed down through the generations. Our task is to break that chain, unless we want it to break us. We accepted the legacy in the charter of a people's rights: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and we must find the way to secure them, or accept the alternative. Freedom means justice to the people or it means nothing; and justice, like true charity, must begin at home—with the home.

We have made that out in our day; and we say rightly that the housing question holds the key to most of the civic problems that beset us. It does; but at bottom it is because it is a much bigger question than of citizenship, even. It is a moral question—not a question of "morals," merely, which is akin to manners, though on that score we have made headway since "men of the

highest character" have abandoned the owning of slum tenements for profit—but the moral question whether I shall love my neighbor or kill him ; whether I shall stand idly by and see my brother's soul stunted, smothered in the slum of my making, of my tacit consent at any rate, or put in all upon rescuing him. Brethren, we shall never rescue our city, you will never rescue yours, until we understand that that is what it all harks back to, that all these things mean one and the same thing : *that I am my brother's keeper for good or for evil.* No man liveth unto himself alone. A moral, a profoundly religious question bound up inseparably with our faith, if by it we mean something which is alive ; and it is only the living faith *here* that has claim upon life in the hereafter. No man who, unmoved, sees his brother perish on earth, need expect a welcoming hand to be reached out to him from the skies, if I read my Bible aright.

It is hard to understand the attitude of

the church, through all those weary years, towards the people it was meant to shepherd, except upon the assumption, which was a fact, that it, too, had been seized and carried away by the prevailing craze, taking the thing for the soul of the thing. Handsome church edifices went up, with brown stone and marble and carvings without stint, further and further from the people's homes; though not always as the record shows. In the rear of Trinity Church and "overlooked by the stained-glass windows of that beautiful edifice," the legislative committee, of which I spoke, pointed, with a scorn it hardly made an attempt to conceal, to a tenement containing fourteen families in which "filth and want of ventilation were enough to infect the very walls with disease." As a matter of fact, two epidemics of yellow fever and of cholera had started in that row. But whether the churches were near or far, the people kept aloof from them. *That* is not hard to understand, when I recall the dive in William

Street, with two stories of vileness underground, that was known in the Health Department to belong to a New Jersey church corporation! The profits were the devil's wages and they went to pay for what some Christians called God's work! I suppose they persuaded themselves—men can persuade themselves to almost anything if they want to—that that was the reason they were not willing to give them up, and they fought stubbornly the efforts of the authorities to break up the dive where unspeakable debauchery held high carnival most of the day and all of the night. It is not hard to understand, when there comes to mind the congregation of Christians that moved up-town from Mulberry Street and sold their old house of worship to speculating builders, who converted it into a rear tenement, put a brick building in front and into these barracks piled a hundred families, a total of three hundred and sixty persons. What kind of home altars were there, think you? That was at the Five Points where the



dives were particularly vile, but I will warrant that there was nothing in the saloon in the front basement one half as bad as in the flats in the rear, where men and women had once sat and worshiped their God, to whose service they had dedicated that house.

In 1868, the death rate in the "Old Church Tenements," as they were called until for very shame we destroyed them, was *seventy-five per thousand*, counting only those who died in the houses, not those whose end came in the hospitals to which those tenements were "among the largest contributors."

Hard to understand that men fell away from the church? They must have thought that the Lord had forgotten them; but it was only the men who professed His name that had forgotten. *He* remembered. The day will come, I hope,—I think it is on the way now,—when we shall be permitted to forget the greatest wrong of all; that it was a church corporation, the



strongest and wealthiest, and alas! our own, that, for its temporal advantage and to save a paltry few hundred dollars, took up the cudgel for the enemy we were battling with and all but succeeded in upsetting the whole structure of tenement-house law we had built up with such weary toil in our effort to help the man to a level where he might own himself a man. You know the story of that and how bitterly it has rankled these many years. The church corporation was a tenement-house owner, one of the largest, if not, indeed the largest in the city, and its buildings were old and bad. It suited its purposes to let them be bad, because they were down-town where the land was rapidly getting valuable for warehouse purposes, and the tenements were all to be torn down by and by. And so it was that it achieved the reputation of being the worst of landlords, hardly a name to attract the people to its pews. We had got to the point in our fight where we had made good the claim of the tenant

to at least a full supply of water in his house, though light and air were yet denied him by the builder, when that church corporation chose to contest the law ordering it to supply water in its houses, and won, for the time being, on the plea that the law was arbitrary and autocratic. They are all autocratic, the laws that are made for the protection of the poor man; they have to be while the purpose to hinder rather than help lives in his brother. We trembled on the edge of a general collapse of all our remedial laws, until the court of last resort decided that any such claim was contrary to public policy and therefore inadmissible.

It was not long after that, that a distinguished body of churchmen in my city invited me to speak to them of slum evils. And I showed them pictures of the little children from the gutter, until at last some unthinking brother made the comment: "Oh, well, they wouldn't wash, if you gave them the chance." Perhaps you can im-

agine the result. I would not have missed that opportunity for a good deal.

I am not telling you these things to rake up forgotten sins; I am trying to show you whence came the deadly apathy that was to blame for our plight. Our conscience was asleep and the Church that should have kept it awake slept, too. We cannot afford to forget it yet, for that conscience of ours is none too robust, or else it is singularly drowsy in spells. I am thinking of the time, only a little while ago, when Theodore Roosevelt was Police Commissioner in New York, and of his astonished look when churchmen, citizens from whom he should have expected support, and did expect it, for his appeal was to them direct, came to him daily to plead for "discretion" in the enforcement of the laws he was sworn to carry out. Not all of them did this—he had many strong backers among the clergy and lay-brethren—but too many. You should have been with me in those days and you would have under-

stood what that fight was. The saloon was the enemy, and, in a single week during that struggle, it wrecked eight homes by tragedies, with which I, as a police reporter, was called to deal. I am not speaking now of the numberless tragedies that drag their slow lengths through the years, but of those that reached the acute stage in my sight that week. Four desperate wives were driven to suicide and two were murdered by drunken husbands. One aged woman was beaten to death by her beastly son when she refused him money to continue his debauch. And a policeman was killed in the street by drunken marauders. That was the showing; and it was for discretion in dealing with that enemy those people strove, calling the President of the Police Board "hasty." They were "men of the highest character, but they failed to appreciate the responsibility" which that character imposed upon them.

They called Roosevelt hasty. It was time that some one got up some speed in

New York. More than a hundred years ago (to be exact, in 1797) the legislature of New York prohibited soap factories on Manhattan Island, south of Grand Street, in the interest of the public good. Within seven weeks after the order was issued, the same legislature amended its act, giving the Health Board discretion in the premises; and the biggest soap factory in the land is below Grand Street to-day. The power of soap is great.

Do you know that article of discretion in Philadelphia? In my town, it has built up tenement blocks almost solid, ninety-three per cent. covered with brick and mortar; it has penned tenants in burning tenements with stairs of wood that should have been fireproof; it has filled the pockets of the builder and wrung the heart of the tenant, until, in despair, he refused to believe in either God or man. That is what "discretion" has come to with us. Oh! for red blood in the veins of Christians, for a muscular faith that, rather than stand by

and see such things done, will fight till—till some one dies. That is the kind of faith that moves the world, mountains and all, and fills the churches! Not sermons, but service! So we win victories that tell.

Now do you wonder that the common people, so deserted by their best friend, took the first proffered hand held out to help? To this multitude, toiling for their daily bread until it fills the landscape to the exclusion of all else, until time and chance are lost to them to lift up their heads and get the wider view—to them, disheartened and sore, comes the boss with his self-seeking and says: "I am your friend." And he proves it: he gets Pat a job, gets Jim on the force, looks after John who broke his leg and gets him into the hospital that was full; attends to Dan when he gets into trouble with the police. What more natural than that they should give him their votes and their support? The more powerful he, the better able to help. Anyway, is he not their friend? Observe,





AT THE OLD FIVE POINTS

that it all proceeds on the neighborly principle, debased to suit the slum ; but it is still the idea of the neighbor : binding up the wounds, taking the man who has fallen among thieves to the inn and leaving money to have him tended. They knew the plan better than did we, they whom we deserted, churchmen and Christians though we were.

What if the boss robs the city ! The poor man, going home to his tenement, overhears the well-dressed citizen comment upon it with qualified displeasure : " Say what you will, he may be a great rascal, but he gets there, you'll own. And he's got the dough." It is every one for himself in his sight. Is it hard to understand that he, too, falls in with the scheme ?

And now, that I have put the blame where it belongs, let us turn and look at the other side of it, at the day of awakening. It was a long day, for our sleep had been deep, and it was not easy to stay awake long at a time for a considerable





AT THE OLD FIVE POINTS



period after we had tumbled out. The Five Points first aroused us. The slum there had got to the point where it was no longer to be borne. Dickens's pen had pricked us, and the warnings of Charles Loring Brace and his contemporaries began to make us listen. There followed the period of good intentions, but little sense, that gave us Gotham Court and the Big Flat. They were built as model tenements—heaven save the mark! by men who meant well and did badly. They are the kind to keep your eye on. The Big Flat became a thieves' runway, because, unconsciously, the builders had furnished the chance by making it reach through the block, opening upon both streets, in a neighborhood where such a convenience to a man fleeing from the police was a regular windfall. Before its final destruction, it achieved the reputation of being the worst tenement in New York. Gotham Court was a close second. In some other important respects that concerned the home-

life of the people, it was easily first. A sanitary official counted 146 cases of sickness among its thousand tenants in 1862, among them all kinds of infectious disease, from measles to smallpox. It harbored one of the most notorious gangs that ever made lower New York unsafe. Time after time, before it was torn down, less than half a dozen years ago, it was posted as hopeless and fit for nothing else. Yet it was built as a model tenement by a Quaker of good intentions. He certainly did his part in the paving of that infernal door-yard that is said to be laid with good intentions not backed by good sense or hard work.

This Quaker had a brother who also built houses for the poor, and, it is recorded, meant well, too; but the milk of human kindness was soured in him when his neighbor, the alderman, knocked him down in a quarrel over the dividing line between their lots. It was against the Quaker's principles to fight, but he found a way of paying off his enemy that is a whole volume



THE "OLD CHURCH TENEMENTS"

*From "The Battle with the Slum,"  
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of commentaries on graceless human nature: he built a tenement upon his own lot right on the line and with a big dead wall so close to his neighbor's windows that his tenants could get neither sun nor air. They lived in darkness ever after. The fact that, for want of access, his house was useless and stood idle for years, did not stay his revenge. That old Quaker was a hater from way back. His "wall of wrath," as I used to call it, killed more innocent babes and cursed more lives than any other work of man I ever heard of. One wonders what that man's dreams were at night. The mere thought of it used to give me the shivers, and I never slept so sweetly as the night when I had seen that wall laid low by wreckers whom I had set on.

Yet it did not die in its sins. I like to think of that. Before the end came to Gotham Court, we had grown a real conscience. The canker that had crept in and was eating out the home and the heart of the people was arraigned in the churches, as it



should have been a long while before—not in this church or in that church, but in *the churches*. Christian men took hold of the Court and did the most and the best with it that could be done,—which makes me think that only yesterday I had a letter from the son of one of those two brothers, young Bayard Cutting, pleading for support for the work of Bishop Brent out in the Philippines; and it was as I would have expected. You see, as I said, it is all one thing. These men are among the strongest of the backers of the movement to provide homes for the poor of New York, and have been for years; and for that very reason they are the natural supporters of such a work as that which the good Bishop is doing on that far foreign shore.

But, as I said, they did the best with the Court that could be done. The best was bad, and therefore it had to go. Yet, in comparison with what it had been, life even in Double Alley had become comparatively decent before the wreckers boarded up the





GOTHAM COURT

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MIDNIGHT IN GOTHAM COURT

*From "The Battle with the Slum."  
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entrance to it. There were homes in that alley where the word had been as a mockery before. I knew of some; I will tell you the story of Susie Rocco and her home. And we had learned something there; we had added to good intentions the knowledge of the facts, which is the first and most important ingredient in good sense when you come to deal with things. I am going now to show you some of the pictures I promised you, and you shall have more hereafter. Think not that any of them are irrelevant because they are of things that were. Those things are but shadows of what may come again, if we lose our grip and once more let our conscience fall asleep, believing we have done so much that all is well. To avoid that, keep ever a firm grasp of the facts. You will fight in vain for the people's homes till you know what afflicts them. The glory of our present-day Christianity is that at last it plants itself squarely on the facts—seeks them out first and then applies the remedy. Never fear them. If they

clash in any way with scholastic theory or even theology, make sure that they *are* the facts, then seek the fault in your theory. And always remember that human souls live in bodies. If you want to reach the soul, you must reckon with the man in the body ; or your preaching will be vain.

Here, now, is one of the Five Points in the day of its worst disgrace (see illustration facing page 90), but the Point itself was by no means the worst of that neighborhood. These adjoining buildings, I suppose you would call them shanties, and I do not know that I should object to the term, give a general idea of the character of that vicious slum. They were houses surviving from a much earlier day, built for the occupation of one family, and no doubt in that day there were homes in them as good as might be found anywhere. It was when they came to contain from ten to twenty families each that the slum moved in. With four families keeping house in one room—that was the record made by a



THE ALDERMAN'S TENEMENTS



missionary who had that district in charge—short work was made of the home. I used to laugh at that missionary's story of how, when he asked in hopeless bewilderment how they managed to get along, one of the tenants said, "Well enough until one of the other three took a boarder, then trouble began."

But there was little enough to laugh at; less still, when the big buildings sprang up that you see behind the shanties. They are the double-deckers of to-day. They were supposed to be a "way out," for at least they had room for the teeming populations; but it turned out the other way. They gave the home the hardest blow of all, and to-day they are the curse that cleaves to us for our sins of the past, and with which we will have to struggle while we live. I have said a good deal so far, and shall have more to say before I am done, about murder. It is not a nice word, but right here is an instance of what I mean. The particular houses that show in the picture were built

by one Buddensiek, whose name we all came to know in the after years. I heard of it first when I went with the health inspector to investigate a complaint of foul stench that was made by the tenants in those houses. The explanation proved simple. The builder had merely run the soil-pipe three feet or so into the ground without connecting it with the sewer. That time he escaped indictment. It is somehow not so easy to bring a man to book who poisons his tenants with bad plumbing as the one who sticks a knife into his neighbor. Some years after when, grown bold, he neglected to put lime in his mortar and his tenements fell down and killed his workmen before the tenants got into them, the jail claimed him at last on a charge of manslaughter.

And now here are the "old church tenements" I spoke of (see illustration facing page 92); upon the records of the Health Department "among the largest contributors to the hospitals" in the city. The





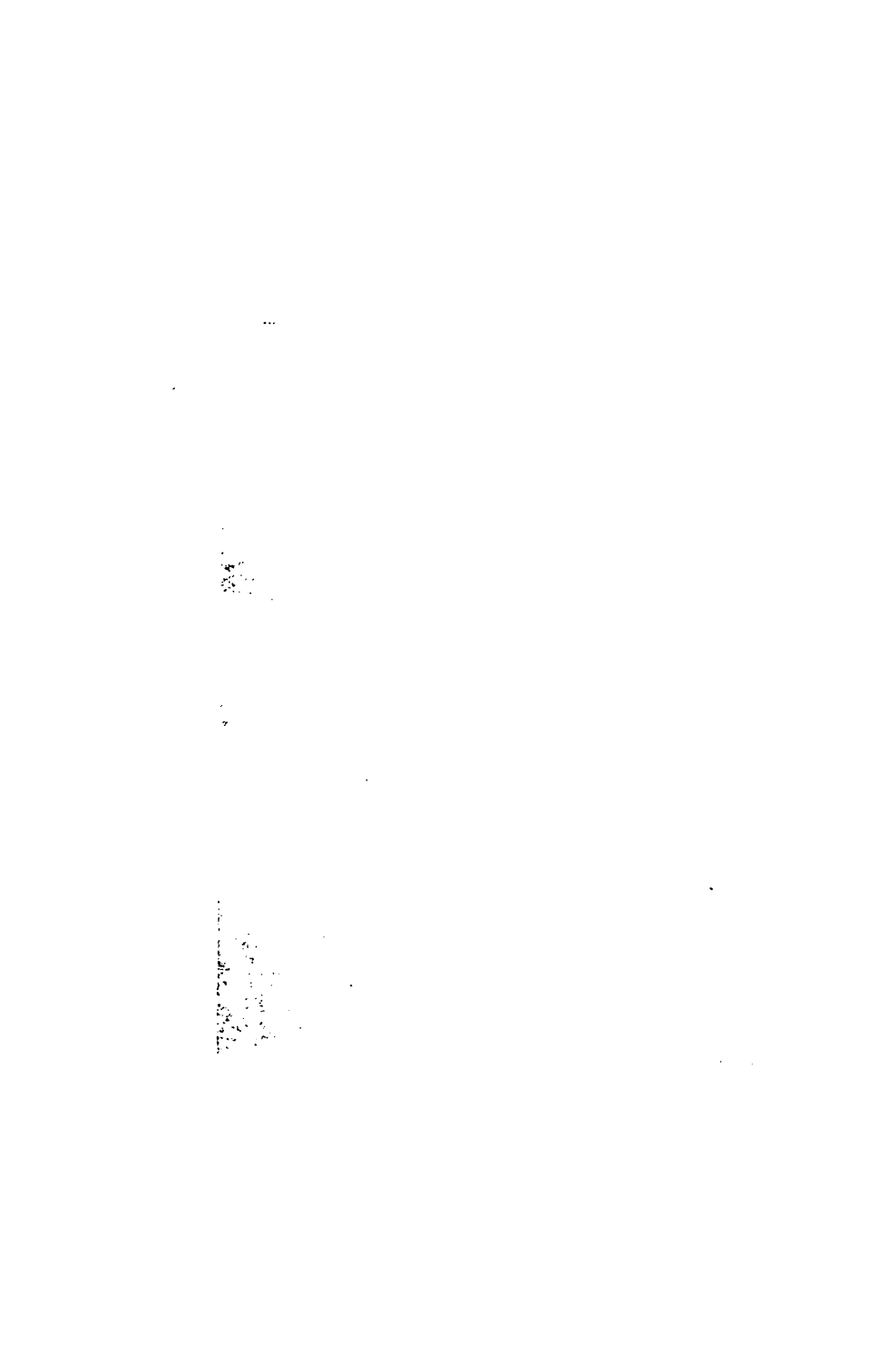
LITTLE SUSIE

From "The Children of the Poor"  
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His house was directly across the street, and in his day it was of course as fine a neighborhood as there was in the city. Within sixty years after his death, the slum had moved in. That tells the story of the mighty strides New York took towards metropolitan greatness, and of the perils that hedged in our path in the race for sudden wealth. For that was the time when we forgot. When I made a census of the Court some years before it was demolished, I found one hundred and forty-two families there. It happened that just half of them were Italians and the other half the original Irish, except that there were two German families there. Perhaps you can imagine the kind of time those two German families were having. The process of displacing the Hibernian element with the Italian is not altogether a peaceful one, as the constant presence of the policemen in the alley bore witness. It was an Irishman, of course, who told me, when I asked him why the policeman was there, that it was "all on



TENEMENT WHERE A HOME WAS MURDERED



account of them two Dutch families in the alley; they make so much trouble that no one can stand it." Nobody else would have thought of it. I shall not try to describe to you in detail what life meant in that place, for it is gone now and I am glad. One Christmas when I was Santa Claus in the alley for the King's Daughters, two hundred little girls came out of it and claimed dolls from me. They might have told you. Do you see the "wall of wrath" of which I spoke? Wait till I will give you a better view of it. There, now, are the Alderman's tenements (see illustration facing page 96) that were cursed by it, as were his tenants all the days of their lives. But the wall, too, is gone. It went one Christmas, and in its fall it was to me as if I heard again the chorus of angels' voices singing, "Peace on earth, good-will towards men." I had never heard any angels' voices in that alley before.

Here is one of the little girls who got my dolls (see illustration facing page 98),

little Susie Rocco, whose story I promised to tell you. Susie was as good a girl as you can find in Philadelphia, search where you may. Perhaps she was not very well instructed in the higher ethics of things. It may be that Mrs. Carrie Nation would not have approved of her, because the work she did and by which she helped her mother run the household was pasting covers on pocket-flasks, whiskey flasks, which, I suppose, come under the ban entirely. Susie did not, I know. She was not concerned about that; she was concerned about helping her mother, and, though I am no champion of the whiskey flask, I stand with Susie. Her father was a loafer and when he ran away at last and the mother fell ill and Susie's work gave out, the evil days came that are never far away in a slum alley. Everything went to the pawnshop, last of all the mother's wedding ring. I should have sent that first, but she was a woman; I am a man. She had to go to the hospital then; the



A "DRUNKEN" FLAT

*From "How the Other Half Lives."  
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doctor said so. It was the only place where she could be properly cared for.

Susie wept. She was afraid of the hospital. You know it, all of you who have had any dealings with the poor, that one of their very real hardships is that, when most they need that friend, they are afraid of him. Susie could not bear the thought. She cast about in the house for something that was yet of value enough to take to the pawnshop, so that she might stay the evil day, and she found my doll. It was not a nice doll by that time; it was very much in need of the hospital itself. But to Susie it was precious beyond compare, for was it not her doll baby? She did it up in a newspaper and carried it to the pawnshop with tears, for she was bringing the greatest sacrifice of all. And that bad man, when he unrolled the bundle and saw what it held, smashed the doll angrily against the stove and put little Susie out into the street. There she stood and wept, as if she would cry her eyes out, and there

one of the King's Daughters found her ; and that was how I came to know Susie and her story.

Better days came for her and her mother, for the ladies took them up and cared for them. They were made happy and I ought to have been, but I was not. Let me confess it right here and have done with it. I am no scrapper ; I have too much else to do to go around picking quarrels with everybody. I try hard to do as the Apostle says : " live peaceably with all men as far as in me lies " ; but how can it lie very far in anybody with that kind of a pawnbroker in the landscape ? I own that the notion of having one little round with that man, just one little one, has charms that I cannot get around.

To this tenement (see illustration facing page 100) my business as a police reporter led me. A home had been murdered there : a drunken husband had killed his wife. I know it is a common belief that drunkenness accounts for pretty nearly all the pov-



IN A BAXTER STREET YARD



SHANTY DWELLINGS IN A TENEMENT YARD

*From "The Battle with the Slum,"  
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erty there is. I do not find it so. It did in this case and there are enough such and to spare; but I think the verdict of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, once upon a time, came nearer the truth, namely, that forty per cent. of the helpless poverty was due to drunkenness, or the drunkenness due to the poverty. I forget the exact way they put it, but that was the sense of it, and it was good sense. Suppose you had to live in such a place as this! (See illustration facing page 102.) Do you think human life would seem especially precious or sacred, and don't you think you would run to the saloon as, by comparison, far the more decent and human spot in that place? I know I would; and I think that one of our worst offenses against the brother is, after letting him be robbed of his home to leave him at the mercy of the saloon as the one place of human companionship for him, the one humanly decent spot in all his environment. I said "letting him be

robbed." There lies on my table a report of the Health Department of the year 1869, and it opens at the page upon which is recorded the result of a tour of the Sanitary Committee through the tenement house districts that year. They found that the landlords kept those houses "as a business and generally as a speculation. He was seeking a certain percentage on his outlay, and that percentage very rarely fell below fifteen per cent. and frequently exceeded thirty—the complaint was universal among the tenants that *they were entirely uncared for*—the agent's instructions were simple but emphatic: collect the rents in advance, or, failing, eject the occupant." You see the scheme of the robbery. It is plain enough.

Out of such conditions came little Antonia Candia, stripped by an inhuman stepmother and beaten with a red-hot poker until her body was one mass of burns and bruises. That stepmother went to jail a long while since, but we have need still of the services of the Children's Society that



WASHING IN AN ITALIAN FLAT; THE TEA KETTLE USED  
AS A WASH BOILER





has thrown a strong and watchful arm around more than one hundred thousand little ones in the slum where the home had been wrecked. They are the ones that need our care, if only because (I have said it before and I shall have yet to say it many times) they are our own to-morrow. I remember the case of a bright little lad in an East-side tenement whose home had given him up to the street, as do those homes right along. All day he carried the growler from the shop where his father worked to the saloon on the corner, and when evening came he was missing. It was Saturday and he did not come home that night. They sought him all day Sunday in vain. Monday morning when they opened the shop, they found him in the cellar where he had crept after drinking of the beer, and where the rats had found *him*. Not even his mother could recognize him.

These are the ones to look out for ; and the aged and helpless. Nor need we marvel much if those whose lives have been spent

in the crowds turn their backs upon the country, upon the woods and the fields, when we offer them a refuge there. The tenement has robbed them of their resources, of the individuality that makes a man good company for himself. It is only a man who can think that is at home in the fields. The slum never thinks; it is all the time trying to forget. There is nothing good to think of, nothing worth remembering.

These are ours to care for. The tramp, the lazy man, is entitled only to be locked up. Only the other day, I was invited to come to Boston and join in a discussion of the tramp problem before a distinguished body there; and I refused. I do not think there is a tramp problem which hard labor behind strong bars cannot solve. It is just a question of human laziness. Save the young, and lock up the old man who will not work. A fellow whom I found sitting in a Baxter Street yard, smoking his pipe contentedly, gave me points on that. (See



PIETRO AND HIS FATHER



illustration facing page 104.) He was willing to be photographed for ten cents; but, before I could train my camera on him, his mind had evolved possibilities not to be neglected. He was smoking a clay pipe that had, perhaps, cost a cent, but I suppose it was an effort to hold it between his teeth while I made ready, for he made a demand for twenty-five cents if he was to be photographed in character, pipe and all.

In that yard were habitations built of old boards and discarded roof tin, in which lived men, women and children that had been crowded out of the tenements. (See illustration facing page 104.) The rent collector did not miss them, however. They paid regularly for their piggeries. I feel almost like apologizing to the pig; no pig would have been content to live in such a place without a loud outcry.

Though the flats in the tenements were not much better. How strong do you think the home feeling can be in a place where the family tea-kettle does weekly duty on Mon-



days as a wash-boiler? That was a condition I actually found there. (See illustration facing page 106.) Think of the attraction such a place must have for father and the boys when they come home from work in the evening! We shall cry out against the saloon in vain until we give them something better. And a better substitute for the saloon was never offered than in that old legislative committee's prescription: "To prevent drunkenness give every man a clean and comfortable home."

They are worth it, too. Pietro and his father may be ignorant, may be Italians (see illustration facing page 108); but they are here by our permission, dead set on becoming American citizens, and tremendously impressed with the privileges of that citizenship. So anxious are they to become citizens that, if they can get there by a shorter cut than the law allows, you need not wonder at their taking the chance. The slum teaches them nothing that discovers a moral offense in that. But not



SISTER IRENE AND HER LITTLE ONES





even the slum can wipe out in me the memory of little Pietro, who sat writing and writing with his maimed hand, trying to learn the letters of the alphabet and how to put them together in words, so that he might be the link of communication between his people and the old home in Italy. He was a poor little maimed boy with a sober face, and it wrings my heart now, the recollection of the look he gave me when I plumped out: "Pietro, do you ever laugh?"

"I did wonst," he said.

The sweaters' fruitful soil is here: poverty, over-time and under-pay, all the conditions that go to make child labor and to break up the home. But these also are our own, if they came from a foreign land. The Chinaman we have banished because he would not make his home with us, but remained ever a stranger. That was the reason, and it was a good reason. But what sense is there in refusing one immigrant entry because he will not accept an

American home, and giving to the one who will accept it the slum tenement—to his undoing and to ours?

The children are the ones to look out for while it is yet time: the young and the helpless. I spoke of the foundling babies that come from no one knows where. The city could not keep them, try as it might; but there was one whose great heart found a way. Long years ago she sent them by hundreds to the homes far and near where open hearts were yearning to receive them. It is one of the things that make a man believe in human nature, that make him see God in it in spite of all, the fact that there are so many homes of that kind. Not in a single instance since the joint committee of the two charitable societies in New York, of whose great work I have already spoken, began that work, has a child in their care passed the age of two years without being permanently provided for. And they take no chances, but insist upon the child's being a whole year in its new home before they



THE OPEN TRENCH IN THE POTTER'S FIELD

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permit its adoption. Sister Irene was the one with the great heart. There she stands among her little ones. (See illustration facing page 110.) She was a Roman Catholic, and I was born a Lutheran. We could not very well be farther apart on this earth ; but, if the heaven upon which my gaze is fixed has not room for both of us—if I shall not find her there with my sainted mother, why, it is not the place I am looking for, and I do not want to go.

I have preached my sermon to the text of the wrecked home. I know of no more pitiful spot on earth than the almshouse on Blackwell's Island where, when last I was there, I saw seventeen hundred old women, homeless and hopeless in their great age, waiting for their last ride up the Sound in the "charity boat" to the grave that was waiting for them in the Potter's Field. I know of nothing more hopeless, to all human sight, unless it be that open trench itself. (See illustration facing page 112.) Thank God that there is the Chris-

tian's hope. Even the trench, with its darkness and gloom and surrender, cannot keep that which is born in heaven and which, despite the slum and its vauntings, is at home there with God.

I showed you the Five Points in its old iniquity and told you to bear it in mind, that I would come back to it. I showed you the "old church tenements" and told you what they stood for. Yet, in its disgrace, it was that wicked slum, it was the outrage of that bad day, that showed us the way out. Where those tenements stood, to-day the doors of the Five Points Mission swing daily to let in nearly one thousand children who are taught the better way there. (See illustration facing page 114.) The Point itself has become Paradise Park, a playground for the children; and across the park another mission, the Five Points House of Industry, has registered the self-sacrificing labors of Christian men and women for fifty years. So that on earth there is hope, too. That is the way out.



"THE WAY OUT"—BED-TIME IN THE FIVE POINTS HOUSE OF INDUSTRY NURSERY

From "*How the Other Half Lives*,"  
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Wherever the Gospel and the sunlight go hand in hand in the battle with the slum, there it is already won ; there is an end of it at once.



### **III**

## **OUR FLIGHT IN THE PRESENT**



### III

#### OUR PLIGHT IN THE PRESENT

IN our last talk, I brought you to the point, the turning point, where our conscience awoke in the defense of the imperiled home in the metropolis. We had had one or two false starts before we finally got there; as, for instance, when a cholera invasion was threatened just after the war. It was that which brought the Council of Hygiene into existence. There was the human disposition to lie down under the "visitation of God" and groan, which simply means that we are all as lazy as circumstances will let us be. For utter uselessness, commend me to the man who sits and prays to the Lord to avert the mischief and never lends a hand himself. I used to laugh at an old deacon out in my town on Long Island, who had borne a masterful

hand in dealing with the law-breakers there in the early days, and who when he got excited over the recollection of the wickedness of the past said, "but then me and the Lord we took hold;" but the good deacon was all right on the record. He did his part, stoutly maintaining that it was the Lord's work. I would rather have one such around than a thousand of the other kind. The Council of Hygiene told these people bluntly that just then was a time to pray, broom in hand; and the cholera danger was met.

The real awakening came a quarter of a century ago, when the churches came to the rescue in a body. Out of that movement grew the first genuine model tenement building company and the plan of "philanthropy and five per cent."—that plan which must ever be the way out. In the business of building homes for your brother there must be no taint of the alms-giving that is miscalled charity, more is the pity. It must be an honest business between man

and man, if it is to succeed. Out of that movement came our Octavia Hill, Miss Ellen Collins, who planted homes, in the true sense of the word, in the very slum of slums, down in Water Street, where the word home had not been heard for so long that the children had fairly forgotten it—planted them, too, right in the very devil's preserves, and beat him out of sight—brothel, dance-hall, dive, and all—single-minded and whole-hearted little woman that she is! "An outlay of thought," she told the Tenement House Committee of 1894, "pays better than an outlay of money." She gave her thought freely, and her heart into the bargain; and when, the other day, the longing for rest came to her and she thought of letting some one else take her place, there came a deputation from Water Street, from that benighted neighborhood that was, and begged her to stay, which was a whole volume of cheer on our way; for it showed that hearts throbbed there in response and that Water

Street had a soul, the slum to the contrary notwithstanding. A deputation that recalled that other one, of which Colonel Kilbourne told at the National Conference of Employer and Employee, held last fall in Minneapolis. The Colonel is the manager of a company "between which and its employees no disagreement of any kind has ever arisen." It was in the dark days of the panic of 1893 that a deputation of workmen, with serious looks on their faces, filed into Colonel Kilbourne's office and asked to have a word with him. And this was their errand, as put by the spokesman :

"We know that times are bad. We know that your warehouses are filling up with goods which you cannot sell, and that you cannot get your pay for the goods you have sold. And yet you keep us at work. We do not know what your circumstances are, but you have stood by us and we have come to stand by you. Some of us have been here a few years, some of us many. We have had good pay ; we have been able



to save up some money, and here it is. It is all yours to do with as you please, if you need it in the business."

Who, brethren, gave you and me the right to sit in judgment on these, or to despair of them? When you hear men prate wisely about "the poor coming up to their opportunities," ask Miss Collins what she thinks about it and hear what she will say. The Water Street houses had been a veritable hell before she took hold there. The dark halls were a favorite hiding-place for criminals when chased by the police. It used to be said that if a thief once got into the hallways of these buildings there was no use of further effort to catch him. The buildings were unspeakably filthy. The saloon on the ground floor had finally been closed after one of the bloody fights that were the rule of the neighborhood. Yet practically the same tenants are there to-day and have been these twenty years. It was the landlord who was changed and furnished opportunities for the tenants to

come up to. Miss Collins brought back the home, and her houses became good and decent; the whole neighborhood took a turn for the better, tried to come up to the ideal that she set before it. Miss Collins came out of that awakening, and she is a mile-post forever on the road out of the slum.

St. George's came out of it, with broken towers it is true, but with that which is better than spires pointing skyward: the out-and-out declaration that they might stay broken forever while there were men and women to be saved. "All the money we can gather, for flesh and blood; not a dollar, for brick and mortar!" Out of it came that call for men and women that has stirred our city and the whole country from end to end and has given us in New York forty social settlements where then there was not one.

The movements for better schools, for neighborhood service, for decent tenements, for playgrounds for the children, are ripples

of that great awakening. New York became a harder town to die in and a better town to live in. We hear no more of fashionable women giving Christmas parties to their lap dogs; and the day is at hand when no tenement mother shall need to bemoan the birth of a daughter because of the perils and the shame that await her. That was the cry that came to us from that East-side a year ago; and that was why we fought to win; for it was that or perish. Out of that awakening came the new day that reckons with the tenants as "souls," and which in a score of years has wrought a change with us, in spite of the odds we are battling against, that caused an eastern newspaper to say truly the other day that "New York is teaching her sister cities by her old tenements how not to build, and by her new how to build." It all began there, the fight for the people's homes; and now let us look and see how the battle goes to-day.

Here let me show you a tenement house

block on the East-side to-day, typical of a hundred such and more. (See illustration facing page 126.) There were two thousand seven hundred and eighty-one persons living in it when a census was made of it two years ago, four hundred and sixty-six of them babies in arms. There were four hundred and forty-one dark rooms with no windows at all and six hundred and thirty-five rooms that opened upon the air-shaft. An army of mendicants was marching forth from that block : in five years six hundred and sixty different families in it had applied for public relief. In that time it had harbored thirty-two reported cases of tuberculosis and probably at least three times as many more in all stages that were not reported. The year before, the Health Department had recorded thirteen cases of diphtheria there. However, the rent roll was all right, it amounted to \$113,964 a year.

I tell you these things that you may understand the setting of the home in the greatest of American cities. Two millions



A TYPICAL TENEMENT HOUSE BLOCK



of people in New York live in such tenements. Do you see those narrow slits in the roof? They are the air-shafts, two feet four inches wide, sixty or seventy feet deep, through which light and air are supposed, in the landlord's theory, to come down to the tenants. We have just upset that theory and forbidden those double-deckers with that kind of air-shaft. There are to be courts, hereafter, so that the tenant may have light enough within the house, to make out his neighbor. You will look in vain for a yard for the children to play in, and I was going to say you will look in vain for a bath-tub in that block, but I was wrong there. There is one and I will show it to you. It is remarkable enough to make a note of.

It is upon such tenements as these that the sweat-shop got its grip, that grip which we have been trying with such effort to shake off, for the protection of home and of childhood. Directly across the street from there, I found a sick man using for his pil-



low a bundle of half-finished trousers that were being made in the flat. The man had scarlet fever. The label on the trousers showed that they came from the shop of a Broadway clothier, upon whose counters, but for our coming, they would have been displayed without warning that the death warrant of the purchaser or of some little child in his family was basted in the lining. We are brothers, whether we own it or not, we of the avenue and they of the alley.

Here hangs the bath-tub I spoke of. (See illustration facing page 128.) The landlord did not provide it; it was brought in by a tenant with ambitions, an immigrant, who thought to find here the equality of man with man, of which he had heard. He found the air-shaft in the slum tenement. Suppose now he grows political ideals to correspond with it; who is to blame?

It was in one of the after swells of the great awakening that a man stood up in a





THE ONLY BATHTUB IN THE BLOCK

*From "The Battle with the Slum."  
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meeting of church people of all denominations, gathered to find an answer to the question how to bring those multitudes back to the old altars, and cried: "How shall these people understand the love of God you speak of, when all about them they see only the greed of man?" He was a builder, a Christian builder, and he forthwith set about erecting in Brooklyn a row of tenements such as a Christian man could build with a clear conscience. The Riverside tenements stand there to-day unrivaled. (See illustration facing page 130.) It is much better to live on the yard there than in front, because you have a garden and you have flowers and even a band-stand where the band plays sometimes at the landlord's expense. The tenants are happy and contented. So is the landlord. He told me himself that he has had six and six and a half and even as high as seven per cent. on his investment, and he said with scorn that the talk about the tenants "coming up to their opportunities" was the veriest hum-

bug. "They are there now," he said, "a long way ahead of the landlord." Seven per cent. is good interest on any investment. It almost looks, does it not, as if it were a question then whether a man will take seven per cent. in providing for his brother and save his soul, or twenty-five per cent. and lose it? It is odd that there should be people willing to make the latter bargain; but, since there are such, you might almost say that our fight with the slum is a kind of missionary effort to compel them to take seven per cent. and save their souls in spite of themselves.

Alfred T. White's tenants have homes: he has made it possible for them. Humble homes to be sure, but furniture and show do not make the home of which I am thinking, the home that is the prop of the Republic. Look, now, upon this flat in an East-side block and tell me if you think that that is a proper setting for American citizenship. (See illustration facing page 132.) That is one of the piggeries I have spoken



THE RIVERSIDE TENEMENTS





JOINING "THE CLUB"





of, and there are too many of them. Thirteen persons slept in that room where the law allowed only three. In that neighborhood I counted forty-three families in a tenement where the original builder had made room for seventeen. Do you think that is safe? And what must be the effect upon the growing generation of such an environment as that?

One day I found two boys in a back yard—for a wonder there was a back yard—practicing their writing lesson on the fence, and this is what they wrote: "Keep off the grass." I was thinking the other day when I read about Pompeii and Martinique that who knows but that some time this boasted civilization of ours may be engulfed in such a catastrophe. Then, perhaps a couple of thousand years hence, when the scientific men of that day are digging down to our buried city, they will come upon one of those signs and fetch it up; and they will put their heads together and consult and expound, and then they

will turn to the waiting world and announce that "the men of that day worshipped grass"; and they will not be so far out of the way, either. I have seen, in my day, the grass held to be tremendously sacred, while no one cared about the boy. A little more of that, and the slum will have set a stamp upon those children which it will be hard work to wipe out.

As yet you can do it with soap and water and patience. Take them out into the open, set them among the daisies, and see the change. When they return, it is as if windows had been opened for their souls, through which they could look out and see God. They could not before. That is the offense of the slum which kills the home, that it will not let either the one who is in it or the one who built it see God. Windows for their souls! No need of wondering at that if you saw the window giving upon the dark air-shaft through which those children looked out all the days of their lives when they were at



LODGERS AT "FIVE CENTS A SPOT"

From "How the Other Half Lives,"  
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home! When I stood there with that harassed mother, I asked thoughtlessly if the five children I saw about me were all she had. She reddened a little and there was a sob in her voice as she said: "Yes, all but Mary; she doesn't like to sleep home." Mary was seventeen. You would not have wondered that she did not like to "sleep home" if you had been there. What does that tell us of one of the horrid problems with which we have to do in our cities? It all comes to the wreck of the home.

Poverty Gap was one of the black spots that stand out as I look back over twenty-five years of wrestling with the slum. I have seldom seen a more hopeless place. It was there that "the gang" murdered the one "good boy" there was in the block, for the offense of earning an honest living. Yet the hope there *was* in it all, was with these very children. There came a kindergarten that way and opened our eyes. That is one of the functions of the kindergarten, you know. It is the great

miracle-worker of our day ; it has power to move mountains of indifference, of sloth and wretchedness, of human inefficiency and despair, for it is backed by the eternal forces of faith and hope and love, however much they may look to you or to me like soap and water and toilsome effort. The kindergarten came that way and, when we saw the Gap through its eyes, we were ashamed and set about tearing it down. It was then that an inspiration came to a good woman who had happened upon a pile of sand in the neighborhood. She had it brought in and put upon the site of the old Gap, with wheelbarrows and pails and shovels for the boys and swings for the girls, and the children on the West-side got their first playground. "The gang" went out of business that summer and the Gap that had been violent became orderly.

Its steam had been penned up before and that is bad. What would you think of a yard as wide as an ordinary bedroom, with signs in it forbidding the boys to play ball there

and giving warning that "all boys caught in this yard will be delt with accordin' to law"? I can show you such yards, and wherever they are, gang violence breaks out, for the street is the only alternative. There are no homes in such slums as those.

I went up the dark stairs in one of those tenements and there I trod upon a baby. It is the regular means of introduction to a tenement house baby in the old dark houses, but I never have been able to get used to it. I went off and got my camera and photographed that baby standing with its back against the public sink in a pool of filth that overflowed on the floor. I do not marvel much at the showing of the Gilder Tenement House Committee that one in five of the children in the rear tenements into which the sunlight never comes was killed by the house. It seemed strange, rather, that any survived. But they do, and as soon as they are able, they take to the street, which is thenceforward their training ground.

Some years ago, the Gerry Society picked up two boys that "lived nowhere," so they said. (See illustration facing page 136.) They were brothers with a drunken father and no mother. Some one was curious enough to try to find out their moral and religious status. The older of the two had heard of the Lord's Prayer as something that it was lucky to say over at night before one went to sleep, so as to have good luck the next day pitching pennies; his younger brother knew the name of the Saviour as something to swear by. These were our home heathen, growing up in the Christian city of New York. That is one way of looking at it. There is another for which we have to wait only a few years: then these lads come to the polls with their ballots, and there develops the citizen equality over which their father puzzled in his air-shaft. Ask yourself the question again, is it safe?

These boys belong to the street and they learn its lessons: gambling, pilfering, and and by robbery. A little further along





THEY "LIVED NOWHERE"

*From "How the Other Half Lives."  
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guns on their shoulders, that man could lead those boys where and how far he chose; they would go with him wherever he went. Just remember that it is one of two things, a gun on the shoulder or stripes on the back, where the home interposes no barrier. It is because of the killing off of that home that our jails are filled with young men from the big cities.

From alleys where "the sunlight never enters" comes that growing procession that fills our prisons; where the sunlight does not enter, deeds of darkness naturally belong. When at last we fully understood this, we began to tear down the worst of the rookeries that had murdered the home. Nearly the worst of them all was the Mott Street barracks. There were some six hundred Italians living in that row when it was at its worst, and it was one of the few places I have known in which the rent actually rose as you went up-stairs. There was a little sunlight up there, but only darkness and dirt down below. The yard

between the front and rear tenement—think of calling such a crack a yard—was five feet, ten inches wide. I remember that well. Theodore Roosevelt held one end of the tape line when we measured it, and I the other. By the time we had got up indignation enough to settle with the barracks, he had come into the municipal government of our city and made things go. The showing upon which we arraigned the barracks was, that during a season when we watched it, one-third of the babies there had died, killed by the house. So we tore down the rear tenements, and when we did we found that the mortgage on the property, with its awful baby death rate, was held by a cemetery corporation!

To me the barracks seemed as nearly hell on earth as could be; but let me give you a glimpse of the veritable hell here below. Whatever you may think of the one hereafter, you need not doubt its existence here. One night, when I went through one of the worst dives I ever knew, my

camera caught and held this scene that I set before you. (See illustration facing page 140.) When I look upon that unhappy girl's face, I think that the grace of God can reach that "lost woman" in her sins; but what about the man who made a profit on the slum that gave her up to the street? She *did not sleep home*, that was where the mischief began. What about us who let that slum grow unchallenged, and who took from those in it, with the home on earth the hope of heaven? *We* need the grace of God, if any one does. That is our fight—for the home in which the girl may sleep securely, in which she will want to stay; thank God! we are winning it at last.

For see: these tenements have homes in them. (See illustration facing page 142.) They were built by the City and Suburban Homes Company with money subscribed by Christian men and women. Foremost among them all that good woman to whom we owe so much in this new day of ours,



## HELL ON EARTH

From "The Battle with the Slum,"  
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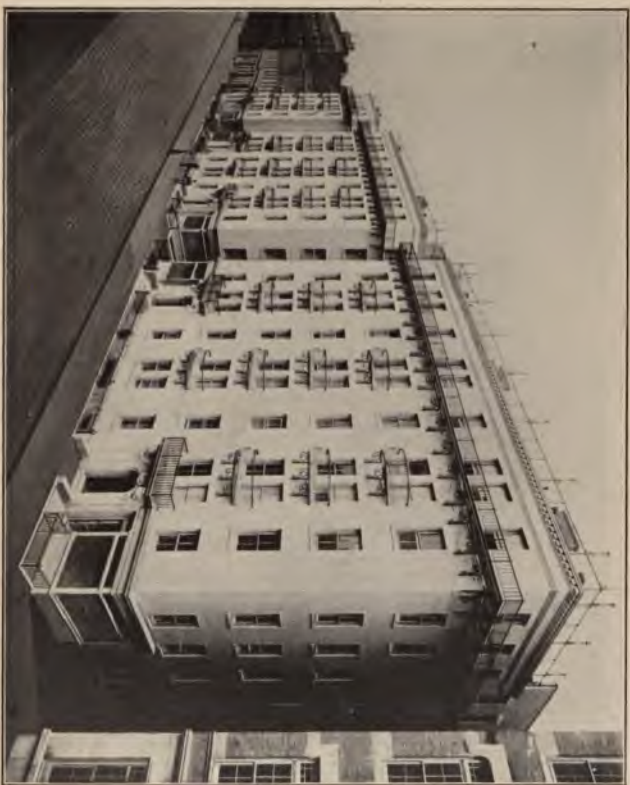


the wife of Bishop Potter. They are called the Alfred Corning Clark Buildings, and stand in West 68th and 69th Streets, in that neighborhood where the "social ideals minted themselves upon the lives of the people at the rate of seven saloon thoughts to one educational thought." The plan of the City and Suburban Homes Company is that of philanthropy and five per cent. They limit their income to five per cent., and have so far received four. Their tenants are happy, as well they may be, and the owners have good cause to be the same. They have done us a very notable service in their work; since those houses were built, others have been added and provision made for some fifteen or sixteen hundred families. Four per cent. on such an investment is enough to settle it in the sight of us all that real homes *can* be provided for the multitude even on Manhattan Island, and therefore must be; also, that the slum landlord must stop building houses that kill his tenants; that murder

is murder, whether it is done with an axe or with a house.

I should like to tell you of that godless municipal "charity" which herded old thieves and old tramps and young homeless lads, who were adrift in the great city, in those vile dens called police station lodging rooms, and of the war upon it that was won at last; but I have written so much and so often about it, and about my own experience in one of those dens, where I was beaten and robbed, and where my little dog was killed, when I was a homeless boy myself, and I have not the time to repeat it. You have fought that same fight in Philadelphia and won it, too. Our battle went dead against us, until that man with honest purpose came among us and set things right. I shall never forget the night he and I spent in touring the police stations together until we brought up in the Church Street station, where the thing happened of which I have just spoken. Standing there, I told him my story and he cried angrily,





THE CITY AND SUBURBAN HOMES COMPANY'S MODEL TENEMENTS  
THE ALFRED CORNING CLARK BLOCK

From "The Battle with the Slum,"  
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"Did they do that to you? I'll smash them to-morrow." And he did. And so that foul disgrace came to an end. Thank God for Theodore Roosevelt!

There remained the awful nuisance of the cheap lodging houses in the Bowery, where thieves recruit their broken-up gangs among the young men who are stranded there, coming from everywhere out in the country. They have a standing army of lodgers, from thirteen to sixteen thousand homeless men and lads; and we knew not what to do with them, until there arose among us a philanthropist who gave of his fortune to solve this problem also. He gave a million or more, and gave so wisely that his work, the great Mills houses, have become one of the real benefactions of to-day. There are two of them and they shelter a constant population of twenty-six hundred lodgers. They are so well managed that they return a profit, even a very good profit, upon the investment. So they are free from the taint of almsgiving and

the man who lives in them can and does keep his self-respect. Mr. D. O. Mills deserves a place among the real benefactors of our day.

I am to speak to you next of the to-morrow. Here it sits in a wagon, two of the children of the poor whose only playground is their father's truck. (See illustration facing page 144.) "Was" I should have said. I took their picture before the day of Colonel Waring, and when they stepped out of the truck they landed in a street where the mud was over half a foot in depth. You never saw anything like it, and pray that you never may. We solaced ourselves with the belief in those days that no one could clean our streets, that it was an impossible job. That was the day of the man who "can't," or rather who won't. When one of the other kind came with his broom, he gave the children their first playground, though it was not a good one, and his broom swept some of the cobwebs out of our heads at the same time. "A man instead of a voter be-



THE "TO-MORROW"

*From "The Children of the Poor."  
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hind every broom," that was his watchword, and it cleaned our streets and cleaned our politics for a season. Just remember it; it applies to other kinds of dirt than that which lies in the street.

The children got a playground, but not the kind they needed. We had to put our hands deep into our pockets to give them that. Over on that East-side, where three hundred and twenty-four thousand persons were penned up upon seven hundred and eleven acres of land, out of reach and out of sight of a green spot, we tore down block after block of old buildings, paying a million dollars for each block, and making the best bargain of our lives in doing it. It was marvelous how long it took us to see that this was good sense, and we were not alone in that, either. A year ago, when I spoke in this city about children and their rights, I was shown a square that had been laid out as a playground for the little ones, but that was wholly neglected and gone to wreck. That was not good

sense. I looked for better among the people of Philadelphia where Benjamin Franklin lived ; and I expect to find it, too.

The Mulberry Bend we laid by the heels ; that was the worst pigsty of all, and here again let me hark back to the murder I have spoken of so often. I do not believe that there was a week in all the twenty years I had to do with the den, as a police reporter, in which I was not called to record there a stabbing or shooting affair, some act of violence. It is now five years since the Bend became a park (see illustration facing page 146), and the police reporter has not had business there once during that time ; not once has a shot been fired or a knife been drawn. That is what it means to let the sunlight in and give the boys their rights in a slum like that !

Of this boy of the slum we shall speak together further. He is just what you let him be : good, if you give him the chance ; bad, if you will have none of him. Take the home out of his life, and you handicap





IT IS FIVE YEARS SINCE THE BEND BECAME A PARK



him forever and mortgage your own future with the heaviest of mortgages. It is since that understanding began to dawn upon us that we have seized playgrounds right and left, wherever we had the chance. I have in mind one which we got away from a corporation on the West-side—it goes a little hard with me to own that it was a church corporation, because by that time the church ought to have had better sense. It was an old burial ground where some of the old-time New Yorkers lay who, in their day, neglected their boys and gave us the heritage of the slum. I hope that they have seen their mistake: I am sure they have, and that their ears are rejoiced by the patter of little children's feet where once there was the silence; for they are echoing the better to-morrow, those little feet.

I wish I had time to tell you the whole story of what we have learned as to that in these last ten years, but it is too long. Let it be enough to say that, wherever we

have destroyed the slum that killed the home and given the children a chance, there order has moved in where violence and gang rule were before, and the police are having a vacation. We are extending that program of ours right and left. Seven years ago we had not one school playground in New York ; now we have a law which says that never another public school shall be built without an outdoor playground for the children. And we have been building more than three-score new and splendid schools since then. Some of these schools have the playgrounds on the street, and some on the roof, and in the latter, last year, Mayor Low's Board of Education put brass bands in the summer evenings during the long vacation, and invited in the neighborhood. If you have any doubts about the millennium's coming nearer, you should have been there then. It seemed to me when I saw three thousand children dancing to the tune of "Sunday Afternoon" on top of the school that had

been used so long as a kind of jail in which to lock them up for the convenience of some one who wanted to get rid of them—it seemed to me then, as if we had put on seven league boots in the race to distance the slum and the janitor. Both of them lost their grip on those children then and there, and for all time; though the janitor strove hard against fate. He tried to drive them away with a club when we were not looking; and when he was caught at that, he reported that those roof playgrounds were no good: they were too hot in summer and too cold in winter. So, it would appear, is most of the rest of the earth.

However, his day is past and the children's is coming. The school of the new day is "built beautiful," quite like a palace, and our women hang the walls of the class-rooms with handsome pictures that open windows for the souls of the little ones, who sit and look on. There are still some growlers who think that the money put into handsome stone and wrought iron

and polished wood is wasted. They are wrong ; we never made a better investment, unless it be in the playgrounds which are part of those schools. All these things help to restore ideals. What is the matter with the slum is that it lacks ideals. Where *they* are made to grow, there comes the irresistible demand for the home that is the essence of good, and then we are on the home stretch.

Our vacation schools gather in the boys, to teach them sloyd and how to handle useful tools (see illustration facing page 150), and the girls to teach them cooking ; and, on alternate days, the men and boys and the women and girls are taught swimming at our public baths. Over on the West-side, where one of our neighborhood parks is being laid out, the Park Department even went into teaching the young lads truck-farming last summer. From that sort of school no one " plays hookey." We shall shortly have no truant question at all, or, if we do, we shall be in a position to



IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL OF TO-DAY





deal with it easily, for there need be no quibbling about the proper disposal of the lad who deserts the school of the new dispensation.

I once found a little fellow picking bones and rags under an ash dump, the only home he knew being a vile shed under that pile of rubbish. That dump was in the identical spot where now one of our new recreation piers extends into the North River. If he had been left there, to grow up as he could—and he could neither read nor write—he would have grown naturally into the tough who says that the world owes him a living, which he is bound to collect as easily as he can, especially without any work. It is a lie; the world owes no man a living. It is like a bank upon which you draw according to the amount of work you put into it and no more. But the boy was not left there, and, as I said, the dump that cursed his life has been replaced by a park and a play-pier. The band comes there in the evening and

the crowds from the tenements, young and old ; and, on the long summer days in the vacation season, the kindergartner comes and gathers her class, and there in the open they study with one another the first lessons of the new political science that shall draw us closer together and restore to us the neighborly feeling, and the lost home with it.

When we build our altar on that ground, we shall hear no more of empty churches. The life has come back. How great was the yearning for it, none of us may ever know. The other day, a little lad, watching the lighted Christmas tree in a settlement in my city, whispered anxiously to the head-worker when the distribution of presents began : " Shall we not worship the tree ? " No, but we shall worship together, they and we, God in the hearts that were at last opened to let them in—to let the lost neighbor in—in His name.

Here they come, an army with banners to help us win the fight for the home !



SALUTING THE FLAG



They are the children of the very poor, sometimes too ragged to attend the public school, and sometimes kept out because they do not know our language. They are the children of foreigners who brought them here that they might live in a free land, at once the only and the greatest heritage they could leave them. If you doubt that they are on our side in the fight, go and hear them salute the flag in the morning (see illustration facing page 152), promising "our hearts, our heads and our hands to our country—one country, one language, one flag!" And never doubt or distrust them again, for to do so is to distrust God, whose children they are, even if we rejected them, and to reject the republic which is to be His means of bringing us together again.

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## **IV**

### **OUR GRIP ON THE TO-MORROW**





## IV

### OUR GRIP ON THE TO-MORROW

IN concluding these lectures, I wish first of all to extend to Philadelphia my hearty thanks for the ready and patient hearing she has given to this fight for the American home, upon which all depends. The great audiences that have attended, whether in church or hall, are in themselves the best guarantee that the fight will be won, that the to-morrow is safe. There is needed only the strong and informed public opinion that sees clearly the peril, to set a barrier against the inroads of the slum. Without that we fight in vain. If Philadelphia or Boston or Connecticut were to be deaf to the evils of sweating, we should be powerless against them in New York, or vice versa. If, on the other hand, public opinion from the Mississippi to the Hudson

condemns tenement-made goods, their market will be gone and our fight won. The protest of Oshkosh against the home conditions that degrade manhood and womanhood in New York is registered at Albany in a hundred echoes from my own state and makes our annual struggle with the selfish interests, that for profit seek to sacrifice the home, so much easier. We shall win, I know it; for, in my own time, I have seen this protest against the abandonment of the brother swell from scattered voices here and there to an angry chorus, that first shamed decent men, who did not know, out of the owning of slum tenements, and afterwards drove Christian men, who did know and who cared, too, into it with the result that we have seen. We shall win the fight—indeed! I have spoken to little purpose if you do not see with me that we *must* win the fight for the people's homes, if we would live as a nation.

And now this to-morrow! Let me bring

you face to face with it as it confronted me one day, years ago, in East 16th Street directly opposite St. George's Church. It stood there in the person of a ragamuffin, typical, in his rags and dirt, of his kind and quite in the character ; for he was engaged in slinging mud. He dug it out of the gutter by the fistful and distributed it impartially all over the church across the way. Why the church, I wondered as I watched him. He, the boy, had no stouter friend than its stalwart rector. Why then throw mud at his church? I went up to ask and for once he was taken unawares. I was upon him before he saw me and put my hand upon his shoulder ! and that moment I knew what I wanted to know, what ailed the lad. The years that have passed have added many details to the record of his case, but nothing of the first importance. It was all clear to me that instant ; for he turned like a hunted wild beast, his fistful of mud gripped tight, to confront the enemy—it could be nothing else. In all

his dreary little life no hand had ever been laid upon his shoulder in kindness. That was the story. That is the story too often yet. Every man's hand raised against him, his was raised against the world that would have none of him. It was self-defense. I saw it and was dumb.

Presently I remembered that I had started to interview him, and asked questions. He did not answer them, but his looks were more eloquent than words; and, at the hard places, another street Arab, a degree less dirty and less spiteful than he, ventured responses that let in the light. Read and write he could not, never went to school. I stared at that; visions of truant officers, of compulsory education laws, rose up before me. I little knew then the true condition of things—it was years after that that our first school census showed us fifty thousand children in the street who should have been on the school-benches, but were shut out for lack of room. What did he know? Nothing. But, said I impa-

tiently, what can he do, what does he do?

"He?" said the other boy with a contempt for my lack of understanding, which he made no effort to conceal, "He throws stones!" And mud. That was all, all we had taught him in his apprenticeship of the street, his preparation for the citizenship that was to come. That was *our* end of the story.

We have been busy since making inquiries concerning this lad who is our to-morrow. We have been at work among the underpinnings to see how fared the props upon which we build character, citizenship—the same thing in the end. When the test comes, they are convertible terms. And the props were not there—they were gone! What had become of them? I have shown you how beset is the home whence came the boy who throws the mud. There is no stronger prop under the character that forms in the growing boy than his home. The tenement is a destroyer of

home and of character, of the individuality that makes character tell. A homeless city—a city without civic pride, without citizen virtue, a despoiler of children, a destroyer of the to-morrow.

Did I tell you of my friend whose house stands in a garden with a sand-heap in which the children dig and romp with their cat and the kittens and the terrier dog? Of how the dog *will* try to smother a kitten now and then in an opportune sand-hole, with the children ever on the watch to avert the threatened catastrophe? And of how they did avert it, until one unlucky day they found a dead kitten in the sand-heap. Whereupon the little girl rushed into her mother's presence with it in her apron and cried out indignantly :

“There, mamma, a perfectly good cat spoiled !”

Just so with these children of the tenement. Perfectly good, as good as any on the avenue with the brown stone mansions, they are spoiled in the tenement house

slum, and the loss is ours, an irreparable loss. The chief prop under the character of the growing boy is gone. Nothing can replace it; nothing ever does.

The school is another. How about the lad's school? The census of which I spoke told us that story seven years ago; and we were surprised. It would have been more to the point had there been no cause for surprise. Two chief props of the to-morrow, of the state—the home and the school—and both neglected! Fifty thousand children in the street who should have been in school! Where the prop had not been knocked out, what had our neglect made of it?

I remember my efforts to catechize a sewing class of girls, all out of the public school, on the subject of Napoleon, of whom there was a big picture on a poster just across the street. Not one of them knew who he was. They thought the picture was of some wild west show character, Buffalo Bill perhaps. Yes, there was one

who "believed she had heard of the gentleman before." She said it timidly and was evidently not sure that she might not be doing an injury to some innocent citizen who might rise and object. This was what she had heard "that he had two wives." Not that he was a great general, not that he was a soldier, a lawgiver, a ruler, a leader of men; but that he had two wives. It was Napoleon scaled down to the level of the slum.

We found out what our neglect had made of the public school when three applicants for appointment as policemen under Theodore Roosevelt wrote in their examination papers that five of the thirteen states that formed the union were, "England, Ireland, Wales, Belfast, and Cork"! Another wrote that Lincoln was murdered by Ballington Booth! We had made our public schools into stuffing machines. Where they should have taught the young to think, they jammed them full of all sorts of things that made manikins of them—not men.



And the "truants" we made by slamming the school-doors in their faces, we took and locked up in a jail behind iron bars, with burglars and thieves and bad boys of every kind, and divided them there—not into the good and the bad; not into the sheep and the goats, remembering that in mingling them there was fearful danger, for how should the young burglar, bursting with pride in his exploit, keep from bragging of it to his admiring side-partner?—not that way were they classified, with a sense of the peril of such a contact, but into squads according to height: four feet, four feet seven, and over four feet seven! That was how we ran our school machinery, without sense or soul; and, where there is neither, character does not grow. That prop—the school—was gone, knocked out from under the boy, the to-morrow.

However, we have done our best to put it back since we made out how badly off we were, for we understand at last the peril of that. Our schools are every day getting

nearer to the ideal school that turns out men and women who think, to do the work of the world. The reformatory I spoke of is no longer guilty of such outrages upon common sense. It is to-day leading the way in an attempt to restore, as nearly as possible, family life and family training in home groups, instead of the deadening institution life, to the children whose greatest misfortune was that they never knew home in the saving sense while they—and we—could so easily have been saved.

And now here is a prop which, certainly during a most critical period of the boy's life, should stand ahead even of the school. I mean his play. Froebel, the great kindergarten who gave us the best legacy of the nineteenth century to its successor, said that play is "the normal occupation of the child through which he first perceives moral relations." Upon this truth and the other, that the child "learns by doing," he built his whole common sense system, which we

now know to be the right beginning of all education, whether of rich or poor. How have we dealt with this strong bulwark? As sacredly should it be guarded as the right of habeas corpus; the one is not of greater moment to the commonwealth than the other. You cannot make a good citizen out of the lad whom you denied a chance to kick a ball across lots when that was his ambition and his right. I have said it before: it takes a whole boy to make a whole man.

How did we guard this bulwark of play? In the chief city of the land, up to half a dozen years ago, the lad had not one place where he might play, safe from the policeman. Not a single playground was there, even on that East-side where half a million tenants were pent up in the big barracks, out of sight and reach of a green spot. Not a school was there with a playground belonging to it. Yes! there was one; over behind the public school in First Street was a little patch in the middle of the block

that had once been a graveyard, but had become a mere litter of tin cans and ash-heaps. It took three years and, I think, as many legislative bills to obtain this sorry boon for the living; but, when it was at last made into a playground, the "gang" in that block went out of business. What became of it? Where did it go? To school, probably. That school became the most popular one on the East-side, and the most orderly.

For all that, however, this playground long remained the only one. It took years to make us see what a clear-headed man across the sea had made out many years before; namely, that crime in our large cities is, to an unsuspected extent, a question of athletics merely—of giving the boys a chance to play when that is what they need. Boys are like steam boilers with steam always up: the steam has to have a safe outlet, or it will find an unsafe one. Boilers have safety-valves with which it is best not to meddle. The boy's safety-valve

is his play. Let the landlord hang up his sign in the yard that he will have no ball playing there, and let the policeman refuse the lad the chance to play in the street, which is a bad place to play at best—let these two sit on the boy's safety-valve, and you need not marvel at the explosion you will hear. You can read of it in the papers every day: such and such a "gang" waylaid the policeman on their beat last night and beat him with his own club. It is nothing to marvel at, no special depravity; it was just the boiler that went bang.

That was the way we safeguarded that prop under the boy, who is father to the man, and we reaped as our reward crooked citizenship. New York is but the type of the rest of our cities in this as in so much else. We are at last taking the kindergarten seriously; here and there "play-schools" are being opened in the long summer vacations. In New York, we have built half a dozen play-piers out into the river, where the little ones dance to the

music of brass bands in the evening. I told you how we put brass bands up on the schoolhouse roofs and invited the neighborhood in. Boston has "play-rooms" for indoor fun in crowded neighborhoods. We shall yet have "play-houses" for the children's use as well as for the grown folk ; but it is still a running fight. Twice in the past year have I been appealed to to help save the kindergarten from ignorant town boards, who could not see what good there was in it that the people should be taxed for its support. The dawn of common sense has set in, but it will be some-time yet to the broad daylight.

There are other props which we have hardly recognized as such. There is the respect for law that means respect for the majesty of the commonwealth, of the state. What have we made of that ? Of the compulsory education law, until within the last half dozen years, we made a laughing stock. Of the factory law, said a legislative committee that looked us over, we made a

mess of perjury and child labor. The excise law became a vehicle of blackmail and corruption. This is how we tended that prop, forgetting that to bring contempt upon the law is the shortest cut to civic cynicism, which is a death-blow to the republic: it lives but in the people's hopes and high ideals.

The very enforcement of law has sometimes seemed a travesty: the boy who steals fifty cents is sent to the house of correction; the man who steals a railroad goes free. So the lad, robbed of every chance and with the fact dinned into his ears unceasingly by those who would make capital of his plight, takes to the street and throws stones and mud at the order of society that gave him no show; at the church, with its pride and pomp; at the citizen in a good coat and a silk hat; at the policeman, when his back is turned and he is far enough away; at anything that stands for the order of society in which he was allowed no place.

Need we wonder at it? Need we cavil at this lad who clutches at the very last straw in vain—the father's help and counsel that means so much to the growing boy? Too often relations between father and son are reversed, and the father must depend on the boy for communication with the strange world around him. He is and remains a stranger, never even learning the language; the boy is born to it and to the new ways that prove a stumbling-block to his father. He, the father, is an Italian, a Greek, a refugee Jew—he is "Dutch." That sums it all up. He is "Dutch" and he is "slow," and, in the inevitable conflict between the old and the new, the boy escapes to the street and to the gang.

Come now with me to the reformatory and look at their records. Three-fourths of the young men who land there are "without moral sense" yet "of average mental capacity," which is to say that they had the common sense to benefit by their opportunities had we put any in their way;



but we did not. See how all but eight or nine in a hundred had bad homes, or homes which, at all events, had no influence for good upon their lives. But in this it is emphatically true that that which is not for is against. Unless the home is a saving influence in the lad's life, the door has been opened for all that is bad and corrupting. More than ninety per cent. were adrift at the age when character is formed. And only one in a hundred escaped bad company!<sup>1</sup> The street has no other kind of company and the street is the alternative of the home.

There is your heredity made to order for you—to *your* order—the heredity of the slum; for the heredity, under which we groan, ever ready to give up, to lay the blame on the Almighty for our shortsightedness, our selfishness and love of ease,—this heredity is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, just the sum of the bad environment which it was in our power to

<sup>1</sup> See Year Book of Elmira Reformatory.

mend if we had but minded it while it was time. The hundredth case we can leave to the Lord, who punishes the sins of the fathers upon their children only in them that *hate* Him. To those who would do His bidding, His work in the world, He is every ready to show a way out. The way is to keep His commandments, the old, and the new that sums up all the rest. Loving our brother, we shall not have the heart to leave him in the slough ; we shall be wanting to fight all the things that drag him down, and so we shall be mending not only his chances in the to-day, but we shall be cutting off the heritage of sin and sorrow and failure that would blight the to-morrow. We shall have lifted the curse that was laid upon man for forgetting his brother—for whoso forgets his brother hateth Him, that is what it means—and shall have helped the kingdom to come upon earth, even as it is in heaven above. By helping men to live the life of men, we shall bring them nearer to Him whose children we are.

That is our heredity, the only real one: that we are children of God! With that backing, who can falter? What is there that you and I cannot do? And how dare we refuse to do it?

"Weakness is what ails the young criminal, not wickedness," say the prison superintendent, the prison chaplain, every one who knows. Lack of character, that is. How could he grow a character in such a setting as his? And for this setting we, not he, are responsible. He could not help himself. Think what it was we wasted! Only the other day the head-worker of one of the social settlements in New York told me of a little Jewish boy in her care, a little chap of eight, whose home is in a tenement where the father works early and late to make ends meet, his darling ambition that his boy shall some day be a rabbi; but the little fellow threw consternation into that household by declaring that he would not be a rabbi when he grew up, and why? "Because," he told my friend, "I do not

believe I could ever think of words beautiful enough to speak to God in." Out of a slum tenement! How you would cherish it forever if your little one were to lift his soul and yours up to God with such a speech! Diamonds in the dust, truly.

I remember the "Kid" they brought to police headquarters handcuffed to two policemen whom he had tried to kill when they came upon him robbing a store. If ever there was a tough, he was one. And yet when they brought him out from the detective office, where he had had his pedigree taken and been photographed and hung in the Rogues' Gallery as the first stop on his way to the jail and to the gallows, there was something underneath the hard crust that spoke to me of the image of God in which he was made. Overlaid by the slum, yes! hopelessly, you might have said; but there is no such thing as hopelessness where the spark of His life is. It may be quickened at any moment. It needs only the right thing to strike fire,

and that thing is always the same. Love of God? He did not know what it was. He would have spurned you away had you come to him with it on your lips. But when, five minutes later, a cry of horror went up on Broadway where a little toddling baby had strayed out upon the railroad track with a runaway car not ten feet from the child, who crowed with delight at the sound of the bell which the gripman banged, sick with dread, for he was powerless to stay the car—when we stood frozen to stone with the despairing shriek of that mother whom men were holding back while they turned their heads away, with her cries ringing the doom of the child in our ears—when there seemed no help on earth, then it was the “Kid” who tore himself from the grasp of the policemen and sprang upon the car-track, saving the child at the risk of his own life a thousand times over! Thief, tough, indexed and hung in the Rogues’ Gallery; started fair for the jail and the gallows, he did not

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hesitate. The peril of the innocent child struck the spark, and the image came out which the slum had tried to smother. Plenty there are who, had they seen him, would not have thought it was there; for there are other things beside the slum that bury it deep, too deep for the spark to struggle through: too good a time, over-indulgence, selfishness, for instance. It is not the first time that men have sought the Lord in the high places in vain. The wise men found Him cradled in the stable with the dumb beasts, and they worshiped Him there.

There was Fighting Mary. She earned her name; that tells the story. A pupil on occasion in the Industrial School of the Children's Aid Society on Seventh Avenue, she had acquired such a reputation as a battler with the gangs of the neighborhood, that it seemed like putting a premium on bad conduct, I suppose, to bid her to the Thanksgiving dinner; but better counsel prevailed, and she was allowed to come.

And when she saw the little mince pie at her plate—a whole pie, the first and only one in her desolate life, though nothing was farther from her mind than thoughts of desolation, with several unsettled scores on hand—her whole childish soul went out to it. She caressed it tenderly, felt of it, sniffed its sweet fragrance, and, when every sense was satisfied except the one that the children all about her were gorging, she crammed it, as carefully as she might, all warm and pulpy as it was, into her dress pocket. The boys saw it and, encouraged by the presence of strangers, jeered a little; not very loudly, for they knew the penalty well; but she heard it and, with one of the looks before which the “gang” had quailed before, she said just this: “For mother.”

That was all; but it brought the tears of penitence, of sorrow and of gladness to the eyes of the good women who thought once of shutting her out as quite beyond hope. Before that day’s sun set, they did what they could to undo the wrong by adopting a

resolution that has since stood upon the records of all the twenty schools and more of the Children's Aid Society: that occasions of mince pie shall carry double rations always, one for Mary and one for mother!

These are the children whose backs we have been loading with the heredity of the slum, of ignorance, of homelessness. There came to me the other day a letter asking me to be present at the fiftieth annual meeting of that Children's Aid Society, which has in all these years been trying to break the bonds of the slum by taking the children from it and planting them out on the Western fields where they may grow in the sunlight. And grow they did; at the meeting to which I was invited, three governors were to be present, two elected by the people in their states and one territorial governor appointed by the president; and all three of them were once bare-legged little raggamuffins taken from the slum of New York!

No hope? No, there will be none for *us*,



unless our eyes are opened speedily ; for it does not end here. We can choose whether we will make of the lad in the slum a governor or a thief ; and we shall have to foot the bill here, if we choose the bad end. But there is another reckoning coming for smothering God's image in a human soul. Somebody has got to foot that bill, too, and it will not be the boy. He was the victim.

The boy sees the choice we are making. He sees us building jails when we should have built schools, though the schools are many times cheaper any way one looks at it. If he has heard that I am my brother's keeper, he must conclude upon the evidence that it means jail-keeper ; and, in disgust and derision at our lack of sense, he throws stones and mud. And who shall blame him ? Not I. I joined him long ago, only I throw ink ; but the idea is the same. The boy has been foully dealt with.

And foolishly ! Where it would have been—is—so easy to *form* character, we have been laboring with such infinite toil

to *reform* it. It would have formed itself had we left the boy the home, for that is where character grows. The loss of it thrust a hundred problems upon us of finding props to take its place. All the labor of forty years has been directed to that end.

The fresh air holidays are one, and how strong a one, how sadly needed, he may know who hears the child cry out upon his first sight of God's open fields, "How blue the sky is, and how much there is of it!" Not much in his slum alley! "The fresh air holiday," said a woman doctor who has labored all her life among the poor in my city, "is a strong plaster for our social ills." And so it is. Some day, I hope to see the touch from my old home, the neighborly Danish touch, added to it for the good of us all. There they exchange; the boys from the city go out to the country to be made over, and the lads from the farms are taken to town by their teachers to see its wonders and to come nearer to the history of their country

that is written there. So they feel more like what they are in fact, neighbors who can pull together all the better because they are no longer strangers. They have been introduced to one another. That idea is worth considering. In our great country, we need to pull together in the days that are coming even more than in the past. There is enough to pull us apart.

The boys' club is another prop. It is the key to the boy that heads off the "gang" and the reformatory that lurks behind it. In the beginning, it grew out of a missionary's great heart, and wherever there is heart in it one boys' club is worth a thousand policemen's clubs in the fight with the slum. The boys were breaking the windows of the mission house in Tompkins' Square and the police could not drive them off. The missionary's wife knew a plan, however: she invited them in to have coffee and cakes. That was the gospel in practical form for Tompkins' Square, and the first boys' club that grew out of that

meeting has to-day an army of members which no building is big enough to house ; and Tompkins' Square, that was once given over to rioting, to "bread or blood" processions, has become orderly and peaceful. The last of the anarchists over there has taken to keeping a beer saloon and accumulating property. We have grafted the boys' club upon the public school and we never did anything better.

The kindergarten is such a prop, and the cooking class is another—never a stronger in the fight with intemperance, that thrives upon bad cooking at home as upon nothing else. The whole reformed school is building new underpinnings for the lad who has so long been left to himself. We have replaced the three R's with the three H's—the head, the heart, and the hand. We are at last teaching the children to think. We are nearly where we can vote six millions of dollars for public schools as readily as for a battleship. When we get to where we can do it without

a tremor, we shall be fairly on the home-stretch. As yet we shudder at the great sums; but they are the opportunities of our greatness, over which we must learn to rejoice more than over fine ships, mighty railroads, vast wheat-fields, territorial expansion and a full treasury; because, if they are not heeded, these other things are but so many temptations and traps for our stumbling feet.

The social settlement is of all the substitute props the strongest. It takes all the rest into its plan to help; and it goes to the home, which is the kernel of all, and tries to help there with neighborly touch. That is the cure. Greed and selfishness killed the home; human sympathy only can bring it back. "My brother" is the word that has healing for all our social ills. The settlement has been compared to a bridge upon which men go over, not down, from the mansion to the tenement; for a bridge must be level to be good. There was a time when men went down to that work, or

shot down their coal and their groceries, as if through a coal chute, in contemptuous settlement of brotherhood arrears. That did not work. The crop we raised from that was hatred and helplessness. But the personal touch can redeem even free soup ; and if there is anything more hopeless than that I do not know it. I am told that here in Philadelphia, where it unaccountably survives, it is coupled, after all, with kindly inquiry and personal interest, serves as a means of opening the door merely. It is a bad key ; but, if that is the use it is put to, as I am told by a venerable Quaker who confronted me sternly with the question, " Jacob, why did thee say in thy book that in Philadelphia common sense appears to be drowned in soup ? "—if that is the way of it, I am willing to condone even free soup, otherwise outlawed as hopeless. It was never the way in my city.

So, whichever way we turn, we come back to the commandment : " My children,

love one another." Doing that, we can leave the results with Him who said it. But we can make them out even now. We can see how things are beginning to tend back towards the home where love grows naturally in the family. The neighborhood idea, that is the heart of the settlement movement, rouses civic pride, rouses ideals that were dead, restores to the neighborhood individuality and to the family dignity. The mothers' club, what does it mean, what does it discuss, but home-making? The home library brings the visitor to the home, picks it out and gives it separate existence, and ties the children to it with a new loyalty. The boys' club belongs there in its ultimate development and will yet go there for its meetings, and the girls' club too. That must be the ultimate aim of the settlement, which is now preparing the ground for it. Everywhere, consciously or unconsciously, the movement is in the air, and growing, to rescue the home from neglect, to put a stop to

child-labor and to home-work that would exclude the family life; the movement to send mother and children back to the home where they are safe.

You, in Philadelphia, have your Octavia Hill Association, that has shown us how to redeem a whole street. I have told you of our efforts in our worse slum. It is so everywhere. I *am* my brother's keeper, and I am ashamed at last not to own it. That is the key-note of the whole modern reform movement, the new charity, the new school, the social settlement and all; and thank God for it!

How long we were finding out that we were neighbors! A year or two ago, I went to a suburb of New York to speak of these things, even as I am now speaking to you. And when that evening I sat at the family board with my host, who was a clergyman, a secretary in a foreign mission board, he said, looking around upon his little ones, that, if I could find him a poor widow in the city with five children of their ages,



whom they could go along with and help as they grew, I would be doing a good thing for them and a better thing for his children. And I promised, for that was ideal charity, neighbor with neighbor.

But it was not easy. Weeks passed before I found a family in an East-side tenement that just filled the requirements. It was Christmas Eve, and, while I stayed to look them over, I came to love them, the good children and the brave little woman fighting her fight all unaided. She told me that she was a scrub-woman in a public building; but it was not until I had gone half way over to the office, to tell my friend on the telephone that I had found what he sought, that I thought of asking where she scrubbed. I went back to ask her.

And where was it, do you think? In the mission building, on his floor! Between them was just the thickness of the oaken door, all the time she had been needing him as he did her, and neither knew where to find the other. They were

neighbors in very truth, and they did not know it.

It may be that your neighbor lives as near to you, in want of much that you can give, your love and friendship first and last. Go and seek him. And when you have found him, bind up his wounds, help him and care for him; and, when you must depart on the morrow, leave of your substance that he may be cared for until you come that way again. That was neighborliness as the Good Samaritan saw it.

“Go,” said the Saviour, “go, and do thou likewise.”







1914

1915

1916

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